SPECIAL ISSUE

Commentary

Volume Seventy-four, Number Four, October 1982

LEBANON: The Case For The War

Robert W. Tucker

THE REBBETZIN A SHORT NOVEL CHAIM GRADE

A New Direction for the Democrats? Penn Kemble

The Missiles of October: Twenty Years Later Peter W. Rodman

The Stalinist Follies Eric M. Breindel

FICTION: Malamud in Decline Joseph Epstein

MOVIES: Fassbinder & the Bloomingdale's Factor Richard Grenier

BOOKS: Lucy S. Dawidowicz/Arnold Beichman/Mark Falcoff/Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.

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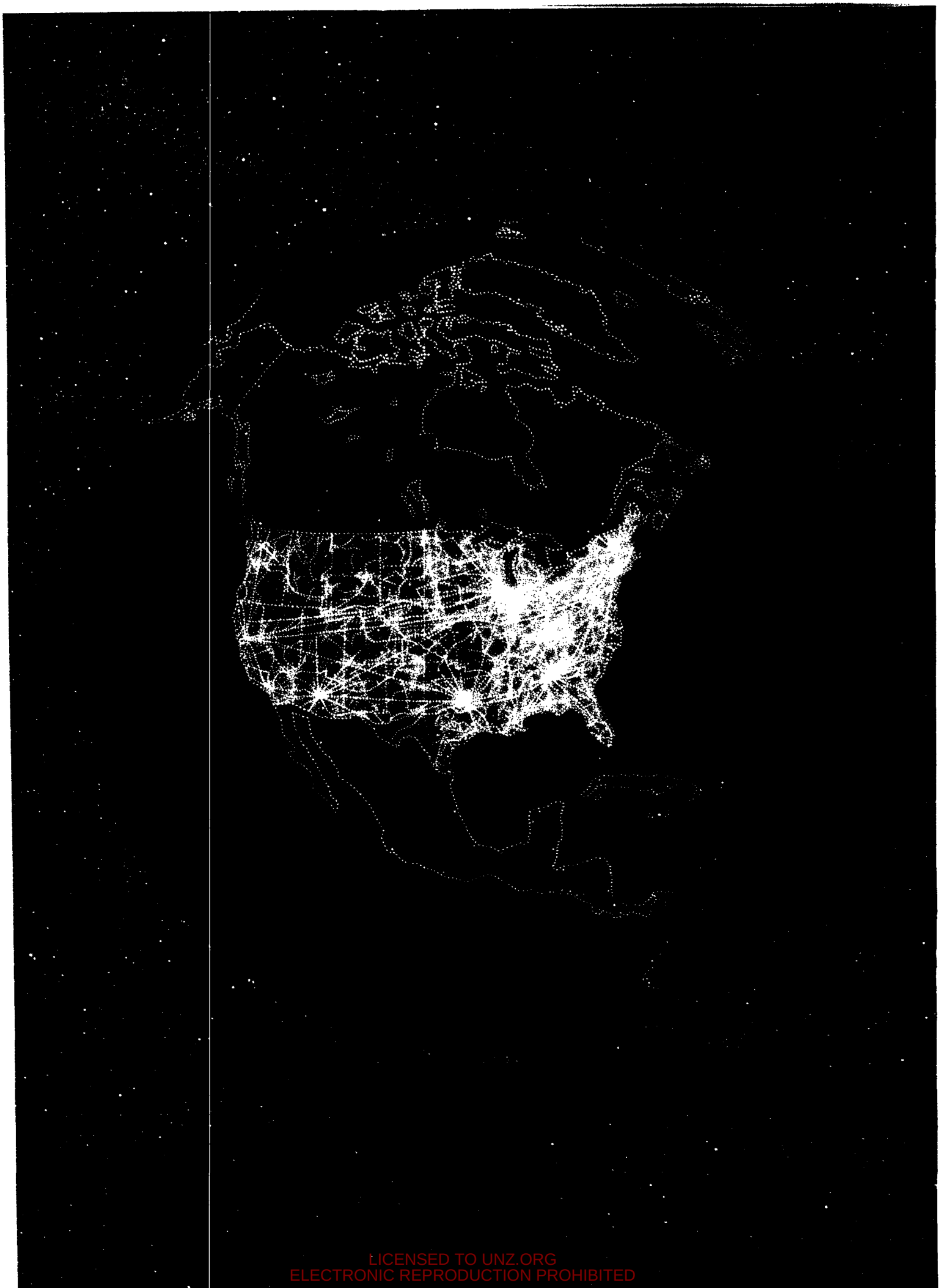

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Commentary

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Executive Editor: Neal Kozodoy
Managing Editor: Marion Magid
Associate Editor: Brenda Brown
Contributing Editors: Robert Alter, Milton Himmelfarb, Walter Laqueur
Comptroller: Philip Shamis
Production Manager: Bruce Lodi
Circulation Manager: Helene Hansen
Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

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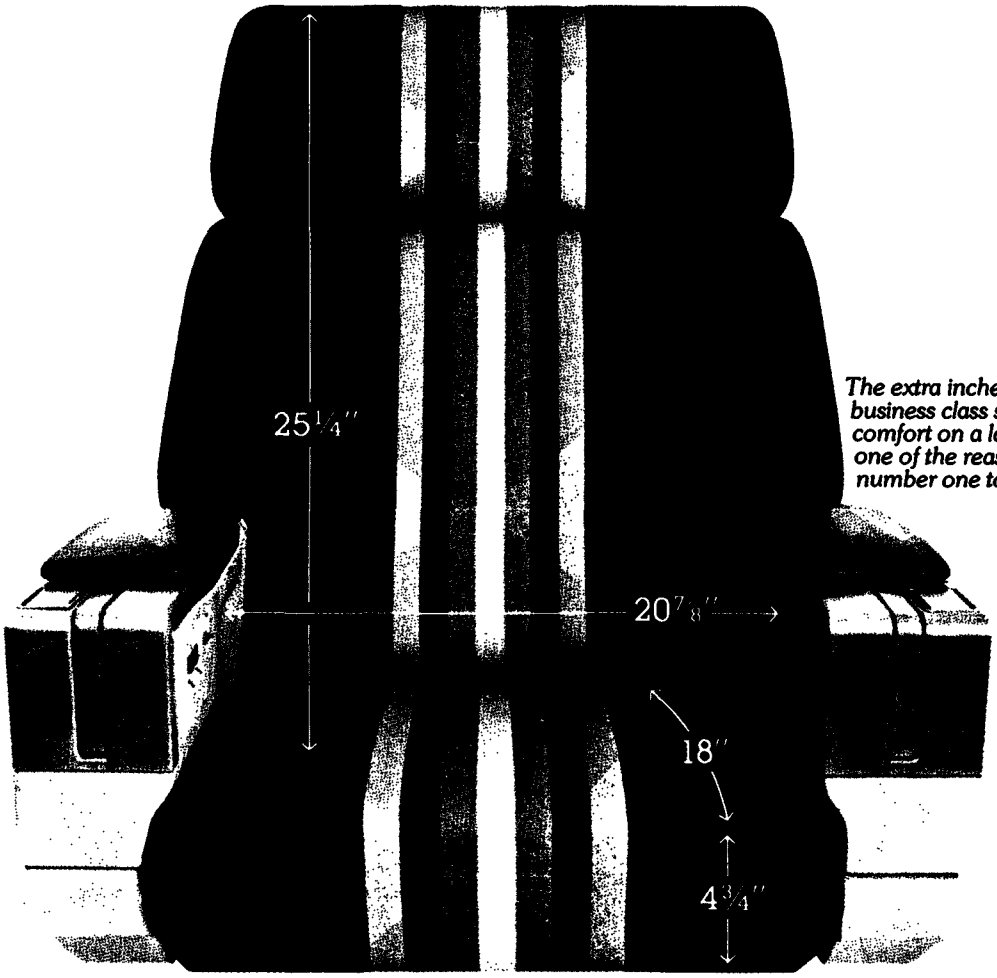

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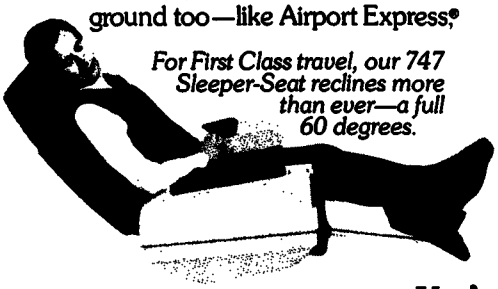

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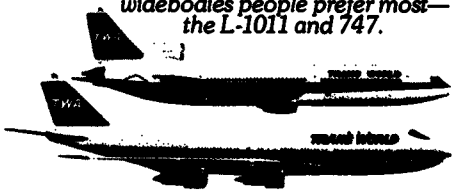

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Letters from Readers

Verification & Arms Control

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is regrettable that Edward Jay Epstein ["Disinformation: Or, Why the CIA Cannot Verify an Arms-Control Agreement," July] does not mention the administration's proposal to the Soviet Union that we agree on cooperative measures of verification to supplement what are called "national technical means," i.e., satellite photography and electronic surveillance. The proposal was based on a full appreciation of the problem Mr. Epstein analyzes and other aspects of the verification issue. It was made in August 1981, and the Soviet Union accepted the principle in November both in Brezhnev's interview in *Der Spiegel* and through diplomatic channels. The issue is now on the agenda of all our arms-control negotiations with the Soviet Union.

EUGENE V. ROSTOW
Director, Arms Control and
Disarmament Agency
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edward Jay Epstein's article on disinformation is a welcome antidote to the glib assurances of unilateral disarmers and freeze advocates that American intelligence could easily detect Soviet cheating on a freeze agreement. But there are more specific limits to intelligence-gathering than the Soviets' expertise in feeding us what they want us to hear. . . .

For example, it is simply not possible for a reconnaissance satellite to determine how many reentry vehicles a Soviet ICBM is carrying; the only way to discover this is to walk up to the missile, unzip its warhead, and count. Similarly, satellite pictures can tell us only that a new factory has been built; they cannot tell us what is being made inside. Again, only on-site inspection, continuous on-site inspection, can do the job.

Simple arithmetic shows the impossibility of even keeping track of new industrial facilities in the USSR, let alone of figuring out what these facilities are producing. Let us assume, generously, that in one day a CIA analyst can examine photographs of 300 square miles, about the area of New York City. Even discounting two-thirds of Russia's 8.5 million square miles as unsuitable for secret installations, the CIA is left with a task that would require 10,000 or so photo-analysts. . . .

MICHAEL LEVIN
Manhattan Institute for
Policy Research
New York City

EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN writes:

Eugene V. Rostow is correct in pointing out that the means for verifying an arms-control agreement can be found if both sides agree to supplement conventional intelligence-gathering with "cooperative measures" such as on-site inspection and tamper-proof electronic sensors located in enemy territory. Despite the difficulties suggested by Michael Levin, it is a resolvable technical problem if it is in the interest of both sides to assure each other of compliance.

The argument I made was that U.S. intelligence, which seeks to intercept enemy data through spies, antennae, and satellites, is always vulnerable to being misled by disinformation. The risks of deception increase when the method of interception is anticipated, as is the case with satellites and other "national technical means," and when an adversary demonstrates that he has sufficient feedback from U.S. intelligence to manipulate it. Under such circumstances, U.S. intelligence cannot be relied on to monitor Soviet missile testing and deployment. If the situation is altered from hostile to cooperative, and the data are generated from U.S.-controlled sources in the Soviet Union, conventional intelligence becomes unnecessary—except as a redundant check. In this sense, the vulnerability of intelligence to deception is an argument for, not against, supplemental on-site arrangements.

Verification of a set of facts is only a narrow part of the issue of deception. Strategic deception aims at misleading the adversary's analysis of factual data—not necessarily at falsifying facts (especially those that might be exposed by enemy intelligence). In its most sophisticated form, disinformation makes available facts that are purposely selected, shaded, and orchestrated to encourage an enemy to misinterpret a strategic design. The facts which an enemy is permitted to intercept and verify may thus result in reinforcing an inaccurate picture, one

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presumably disadvantageous to the adversary's course of action.

The real question that must be addressed, then, does not merely concern "cheating"—i.e., whether the limited data an adversary is supplying, or is permitting to be intercepted, are authentic or falsified—but strategic deception. This, in turn, requires reconsidering assumptions about Soviet strategic aims. Are they based primarily on an intercontinental-missile exchange with the United States? Or are they predicated on the neutralization, and domination, of Europe through intimidation? In the former case, Soviet strategy would aim at increasing the chances of a decisive first strike; in the latter case, Soviet strategy would aim at decreasing the chances of a successful American first strike in the event of crises in Europe. The stream of data available from arms-control monitoring would enhance the latter strategy at the expense of the former. In focusing too intensely on the narrow issue of compliance, there may be a tendency to neglect the question of how the treaty itself fits into the jigsaw of Soviet strategy.

It will be recalled that in the late 1930's Hitler permitted, and indeed invited, Western visitors to "on-site" inspections of Luftwaffe bases and factories—and to observe the performance of planes at air shows. The observable "facts" about speed and production efficiency were quickly passed on to British and French leaders, and they helped reinforce the exaggerated image of the threat of German strategic bombing. What the West did not learn from these "facts" was that Hitler's strategic design for taking over Austria and Czechoslovakia depended on intimidating the Western allies into appeasement by misleading them about the capabilities of the Luftwaffe to bomb London and Paris. Hitler's deception worked not because Western intelligence failed to gather "facts" about the Luftwaffe, but because the subsequent analysis failed to relate them to Hitler's strategic design.

Delegitimating Israel

To the Editor of Commentary:

Bravo, bravo, bravo for Ruth R. Wisse's article, "The Delegitimation of Israel" [July]. It is a milestone in the tradition of Norman Podhoretz's "The Abandonment of Israel" [July 1976].

Mrs. Wisse's article contains what is perhaps the definitive answer to American Jews who join forces with the enemies of Israel and attack the Jewish state. . . .

Peter E. Goldman
Director, Americans for a Safe Israel
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Ruth R. Wisse's article is excellent as far as it goes. But I would go farther and point out that, in addition to their Jewish problem, most American Jews—particularly the more educated and influential—are liberals. Since the mid-60's liberals have not looked kindly upon the efforts of Western-aligned na-

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tions to defend themselves against Communist-aligned forces. People who sided (at least in effect) with North Vietnam against South Vietnam, the Angolan Marxists and their Cuban helpers against Jonas Savimbi's forces, or the Salvadoran guerrillas against the Salvadoran government are likely, if not to side with the PLO and Syria against Israel, then to be very susceptible to portrayals of Israel as the arrogant, imperialist aggressor. And such portrayals are all too forthcoming from the moral watchdogs of CBS, NBC, *Time, Newsweek, et al.*

When one thinks of the recent fate of some Western-aligned nations to whom Jewish and non-Jewish liberals have applied their moral scrutiny, one can only be apprehensive about the future of Israel.

PETER HORNIK
Clifton Park, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Despite Ruth R. Wisse's understandable distress at liberal defections from the Israeli cause, her article tells more about her own outrage than about contemporary political culture. She points accusingly at inveterate Christian anti-Semitism; this may serve her need for a devil theory but it sheds no light on the problem at hand. Israel's most vocal Gentile friends are mostly found today on the Christian Right; Israel's bitterest opponents in the West are either atheists or quasi-Marxist vestigial Christians, typified by the World Council of Churches. One need hardly endorse medieval or czarist anti-Semitism to recognize its irrelevance to anti-Israel rhetoric in America, which emanates largely from the liberal and radical Left. Nor need one be a genius to perceive the link between the current liberal attacks on Israel and the older liberal diatribes against American militarism coupled with praise for Third World revolutionaries.

What has obviously happened is that some liberals, including Jewish ones, have ceased to make an exception for Israel. . . . Not every Jewish liberal is as opportunistic as Congressman Stephen Solarz who supports Soviet-backed terrorists in Namibia but condemns them in Lebanon. Others, like Anthony Lewis, strive for greater consistency. They see no more reason for Lebanese Christians or Israelis to defend themselves against pro-Soviet guerrillas than for the U.S. to keep terrorists out of the Caribbean. . . .

If some liberals have hitherto been sympathetic to Israel, this may be traceable to lingering memories of the Holocaust. Nonetheless, this period of grace is already drawing to an end: the current alliance between Israel and the Lebanese Christians against anti-Western guerrillas will continue to confront Israel's leftist friends with unpleasant choices. . . .

PAUL GOTTFRIED
Rockford College
Rockford, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse argues correctly that Arab attempts to delegitimate Israel in international forums and through academic institutions and the media are a continuation of classical anti-Semitism in another guise. . . . This, however, does not necessarily lead to Mrs. Wisse's conclusion that American Jews who criticize Israel and Israeli policy are practicing the anti-Semites' game of delegitimation. Indeed, her article seems to conclude that because anti-Semitism/anti-Zionism has been successful in certain forums, Israel can do no wrong and thus no self-respecting American Jew can debate or criticize Israel's actions.

Among others, Mrs. Wisse singles out Leonard Fein, the editor of the Jewish periodical *Moment*, as an example of a debased and selfish Jew who seeks to delegitimate Israel. While Leonard Fein's suggestion to boycott the West Bank (*Moment*, May 1982) may be unworkable, he at least is able to step out of the morass of hateful and vindictive history which has surrounded the conflict on both sides and take a long-sighted view of how Israel can best survive as an essentially Jewish state in the region. While Fein's magazine seeks to offer a vehicle (one of the only vehicles available in the Jewish community) for fresh ideas and perspectives about the conflict, Mrs. Wisse seeks to smother anything which smacks of criticism by accusing the critics of being self-hating Jews and debased individuals, thereby practicing a bit of delegitimation herself! She ignores the fact that open discussion is necessary on any issue, especially one as important as the survival of Israel.

American Jews have legitimate reason to fear for the future of Israel. The dilemma of many American Jews is acute. On the one hand, they understand the political importance of a united front behind Israel as well as the immediate danger of the influence of Arab petrodollars. On the other hand, they observe what was essentially a liberal democratic society in the grips of Revisionist Zionism largely supported by North African, Russian, and religious Jews. They fear that holding on to the West Bank will undermine the moral foundations of the state of Israel, leaving Israel to suffer political and spiritual losses that may ultimately cost it its survival. Are these concerns so unreasonable?

The true test of American Jewish self-respect and loyalty is not, as Mrs. Wisse suggests, how well American Jews tacitly comply with Israel's behavior vis-à-vis Lebanon, autonomy, or any number of other issues. Rather, the true test is how courageous and willing American Jews will be in confronting, honestly and openly, the serious and changing realities which Israel will face in the coming years.

JERI COHEN
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse describes some of the recent successes of Arab propaganda efforts. Unfortunately, she implies that American Jewish critics of Israel are giving unpaid service to that campaign. Their attacks on Begin, she writes, "simply echo the Arab language of delegitimation." This may be true of some, but it is not true of all American or Israeli Jews who are unhappy about recent Israeli policies.

Israel before 1967 was clearly a nation defending itself against attack. Israel after 1967 was still a nation under attack, but it was also a nation ruling 1,300,000 newly acquired Arab subjects. Begin and many other Likud members have proclaimed that Judea and Samaria must remain part of Israel, which presumably means a great mass of disaffected Arabs must remain permanently under Israeli rule. Am I lacking in that Jewish self-respect which Mrs. Wisse states we have not altogether regained when I say that I find this an appalling prospect?

A more potent force than Arab oil money in weakening the regard which many Americans once had for Israel are the frequent films on TV of Israeli soldiers dispersing crowds of West Bank demonstrators. Yes, one can argue that the soldiers act with moderation in the face of provocation and that the occasional killing is insignificant when compared, for example, with Syrian

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President Assad killing thousands in his own city of Hama. But this has little effect.

It is true, as Mrs. Wisse writes in her criticism of Anthony Lewis, that "the Israeli presence on the West Bank is not the cause of Arab hatred," but it is also true that this presence weakens the Israeli case. It was not Israeli aggression but rather Jordan's attack in 1967 which brought Israel to the West Bank. It may now require an extraordinary act of statesmanship for the Israelis to leave it. But that act would deprive the Arab campaign of delegitimation of its only legitimate point. . . .

MELVIN SHEFFTZ
Binghamton, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse assumes an unusual definition of democracy when she writes, ". . . since Begin heads a democratic state, he cannot be discredited without calling into question the country that has elected him." The democratic process is based on the right of minorities, when out of power, to engage in ongoing criticism of elected leaders. The Democratic party in the United States and the Labor party in Great Britain are currently engaged in an energetic exercise of this right, as is the Labor party in Israel itself.

We must also recall that Begin himself was not literally "elected" by a majority of Israeli voters: he headed the list of that party which received a plurality. . . .

Mrs. Wisse makes a powerful point when she demonstrates that "evenhandedness toward Israel" is nothing less than being "neutral" about whether Israel exists or not. I also agree that security concerns must sometimes precede morality and that Israel cannot always be "a light unto the nations." But Mrs. Wisse fails to consider that Israel's "security" might indeed be linked to its moral philosophy. A country that acts in disregard of its moral traditions could very well lose the indispensable support of its own citizenry. While I am not suggesting that Israel's internal security is at present jeopardized by its current actions, the possibility of such an occurrence is not beyond imagination.

The growing number of Israeli citizens who are distressed by the West Bank policy of the Begin government testifies to the potential for the erosion of domestic support. This too is a security issue, as the United States learned only too well in the Vietnam era.

There is indeed a tension between living as a Jew in the world while being answerable to our religious tradition. . . . This is an onging tension which the Jew has encountered throughout history. Even the state of Israel cannot eliminate that tension, nor would its elimination necessarily be desirable.

[Rabbi] CHARLES A. KROLOFF
Temple Emanu-El
Westfield, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse points out that her article was submitted just at the onset of the "Peace for Galilee" operation and in her concluding paragraph estimates correctly, as we now know, the potential for increasing attacks on the Israeli government.

Indeed, a New York *Times* article of July 15 zeroed in on one aspect of the outcry. In that article (entitled "Discord Among U.S. Jews Over Israel Seems to Grow"), Norman Podhoretz is quoted as saying that some Jewish critics of Israel were people who had shown little concern for Israel in the past. My own inclination would be to go further: the Israel invasion of Lebanon provided relief to those Jews who, since the Yom Kippur war, have been looking for an opportunity to air their ambivalence and even hostility toward the state of Israel. First, of course, they carefully establish their Jewish identity so as to remove any taint or suspicion of being anti-Semitic. . . .

These people never participated in efforts to support the Israeli state, but seem eager for high visibility when Israel receives bad marks for its behavior. Their usual argument states that they do not like Prime Minister Begin (not that they liked Golda Meir, either); that their criticism causes them tremendous anguish; and that they are merely exercising the right of democratic dissent. But such arguments simply serve as a smoke screen if one looks at the background of those making them.

Tamar Avidar, a correspondent for the Israeli paper *Maariv*, described a recent gathering of the widows and children of the soldiers of an armored division. At the meeting there were 100 women and 250 children, ages seven to eighteen. Miss Avidar describes one encounter that she had with a thirteen-year-old girl who lost her father in the Yom Kippur war: "I was four years old when my father fell; I was never a child: my sister was two years old and my brother two months. My mother taught me how to take care of things." . . .

Israelis continue to pay the highest price for their survival. Those American Jews who arrogate to themselves the right to discipline and lecture Israel . . . are unwilling to pay the price that Israel's citizens are paying. If they lack the decency to realize that without personal sacrifice there is no moral weight to their voice, they should at least cease pretending that they are dedicated to the continued survival of Israel.

ISAAC RABINO
New York City

RUTH R. WISSE writes:

The volume and nature of the letters in response to my article, only some of which appear here, attest to the anxiety of many Americans over the attempt to discredit the state of Israel, especially in the wake of the recent rout of the PLO. My article suggested that some conditions of anti-Semitism have been reconstituted as a direct consequence of Arab refusal to accept the normalcy of a Jewish state among the nations of the world. This sustained rejectionism has once again begun to force Jews into a defensive posture, as if only their right to a state had to be morally justified while all other contemporary states, including the 21 of the Arab League, exist by the divine right of British decree and modern convention. The Arabs' attempt to isolate Israel is a tactic in their unending war against it, but capitulation to their propaganda by some part of the "liberal" sector of our world remains shocking to those with true liberal expectations of human decency.

I would agree with Paul Gottfried and Peter Hornik that the softening of liberalism—the debilitating fear that one might be called upon to defend the freedoms one so enjoys—is a major force in the decline of Israel's prestige. But I am puzzled by Mr. Gottfried's reference to a "devil theory." I did not invent Christian anti-Judaism, nor Aryan racism, nor Communist anti-Semitism, nor Arab "anti-Zionism." No devil of my imagination could have forged a link among these as successfully as Arab and Soviet propaganda have managed to do.

The letters of Jeri Cohen, Melvin Shefftz, and Rabbi Charles A. Kro-

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loff show some of the confusion of mind and spirit that has overtaken the American Jewish community. Each of them appears to accept the major part of my analysis, but not its conclusions. They see no connection between the climate of opinion and their own political priorities.

My review of anti-Semitism was undertaken to trace the correlation between anti-Jewish pressure in the surrounding culture and the degree of internal Jewish conflict. Since none of my correspondents refers to this point, I must have failed to make it sufficiently clear. I contend that the current self-gratulatory "debate" within American Jewish ranks began at the moment (before Begin's election) when the Arabs moved their offensive into the international arena and couched it in the language of liberation. The Arab exploitation of the Palestinian issue—which demonstrably never was and never will be the *cause* of Arab rejectionism—first made inroads among the New Left, and then, with the fall-out from the 60's, among ever broader segments of the liberal Left. The Arabs transformed their own racist objection to the presence of a Jewish state in the Middle East into an accusation of Zionist racism; their own aggressive refusal to allow a Jewish state in their near-hegemony of the Middle East into an Israeli refusal to allow a 22nd Arab state. It is a rather spectacular use of the Big Lie and it has had spectacular success. The proof is that Rabbi Kroloff, Mr. Shefftz, and Miss Cohen are now prepared, as concerned American Jews, to turn their attention to *Israeli* aggression, expansion, etc., instead of to the Arabs who still deny the Jews a state irrespective of its size, composition, or Prime Minister.

The question is not one of agreement or disagreement with the current government's policies, as so many Jews now disingenuously put it, but of political action. The assault of the Arabs is upon the state of Israel as such, and either the Jews will mount what counterattack they can against the war of delegitimation, or they will fall prey to it themselves. In answer to Mr. Shefftz's rhetorical question: "Am I lacking in . . . Jewish self-respect . . . when I say that I find [Israel's West Bank rule] an appalling prospect?" I would answer, yes, for this reason: the truly appalling feature of Israel's West Bank rule is its origin in Jordan's unprovoked attack of 1967 and subsequent refusal to join in any and all peace negotiations. Even more appalling is the mounting pressure on Israel to return land acquired in a war of self-defense, *without a peace treaty*, an application of the double standard in international relations so blatant as to offend any self-respecting citizen. Most appalling of all is the danger of a PLO state on Israel's borders, until recently the only alternative to Israel's possession, and perhaps even now a lurking danger. How else but as a sign of demoralization can we understand Mr. Shefftz's *choice* of appalling prospects and the order of his political concerns?

Miss Cohen distorts my argument in a familiar way, attributing inflexible dogmatism to me so that her own criticism will appear "open" and "courageous." No, I do not "seem to conclude . . . that Israel can do no wrong." In fact, let us suppose that from an American Jewish perspective Israel can do no right. What I say, as opposed to seeming to say, is that Israel's sovereignty cannot be conditional, any more than that of any other nation, on its right-doing. The Israelis, tired as they are after 34 years, are still fighting for their right to unexceptional national existence. American Jews may surely be expected to fight for the *idea* of Israel's right to an unexceptional national existence with no less tenacity, and no less skill.

I did not say that Leonard Fein is debased and selfish. I merely said that his promotion of the Arab weapon of boycott was debased and selfish. Miss Cohen, who is so concerned for freedom of expression, might also try to explain this one: it happens that a featured article in Mr. Fein's *Moment* called for the silencing of *this* magazine, not the other way around.

During the many recent interviews with the PLO on American television, the "Palestine" of their objective was invariably the entire Jewish state of Israel and not, as so much of the media pretend, the West Bank. Until the Arabs make this distinction, no one can make it

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for them, and until they acknowledge Israel in their minds and on their maps, they force upon Israel and its Jewish supporters a war that we dare not shirk or lose.

Pluralism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Nathan Glazer's article, "Ethnicity—North, South, West" [May], exhibits his usual qualities of political realism and a grasp of historical circumstance and process, combined with an animus against the legitimation and, worse, the encouragement of group conflict. What is unique in Mr. Glazer's argument is the absence of the term or concept "pluralism." What is missing is a reaffirmation of the necessity for a system of politics which both reflects and contains the growing pluralism of American group life.

Mr. Glazer notes the growing importance of group grievances and (here note an echo of old Southern complaints about "outside agitators") the intensification of legal "combat" by "adversary" lawyers without organic community ties. While he is correct to point out that group differences in income, occupation, language, educational achievement, and voting participation are now national political issues, he fails to perceive that these issues do not arise from the imposition of a Southern pattern upon group relations but from the awkward working-out of a confused philosophy of equality of opportunity.

I can agree with Mr. Glazer's unstated presupposition that the process of intergroup politics should ideally be shaped by the representatives of "natural" ethnic communities. This presupposition, however, is inconsistent with his claims for the virtues of Americanization. Moreover, contrary to his claim that "the model of full assimilation and Americanization . . . characterized the period of World War I through the 1930's," most Americans and politicians, both North and South, were neither color- nor group-blind during this period. The model or ideology was implicit and a major shaping influence in social-science investigations, only to be overturned in response to the fracturing events of the 1960's. Contemporary scholarship and litigation are more pluralistic. We need not applaud the emphasis upon grievances and reparations to welcome this process.

It remains to be seen whether, given the legal and ideological impediments and confusions now present, an adequate pluralistic model will soon inform our thinking and research into group realities and possibilities. I doubt that a return to assimilationist models and the hope that "the United States would become as homogeneous as the nations of the old world" provides us with much direction.

R. FRED WACKER
Wayne State University
Detroit, Michigan

NATHAN GLAZER writes:

A few people have written me in the vein of R. Fred Wacker, and have led me to reflect on the problem of pluralism and its role in American life. Pluralism of course has meant many things (and I have been much enlightened by an unpublished essay by Philip Gleason of Notre Dame on how many different things it has meant). If one means what I described as the Northern pattern—tolerance for ethnic and other kinds of pluralism, with

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the state uninvolved in sponsoring or suppressing it, and recognizing only individual rights, without any additional rights to any individual owing to ethnic-group membership—then I am a pluralist. One has to acknowledge that state indifference in a formal sense does not prevent ethnic communities from organizing and exercising influence on the state in defense of ethnic-group interests, but in this pattern these actions must be ideally defended in universalistic terms. Jews put pressure on the American government to provide aid to Israel, arguing that it is in American interests to do so. But when the state gives formal recognition to some groups—as it does in affirmative-action requirements, or in some unfortunate provisions of the Voting Rights Act—we create a publicly recognized corporate group identity. This, too, is pluralism, but it is a form of pluralism that I find troublesome. My point about "assimilation" was that neither in its motives nor in its effects was the pressure for assimilation all bad, and I was proposing that we consider such movement more sympathetically. As I wrote: "Without endorsing the rigors of the Americanization programs of World War I and the succeeding decades, one can still see the virtue of forming a single society out of many stocks and can still see that this process deserves some public guidance." I realize "single" is as ambiguous as "pluralistic." What I was urging was more emphasis on the *"unum"* of *"E pluribus unum."*

Kissinger

To the Editor of Commentary:

Norman Podhoretz in "Kissinger Reconsidered" [June] pays due tribute to the literary excellence of the first two volumes of Henry Kissinger's memoirs. His tribute is timely since too many commentators have ignored this aspect in their overeagerness to apply the test of hindsight to the policies of which he was both part-initiator and executant. . . .

Of course, the strategies pursued by Kissinger were often flawed, sometimes fatally so. As Mr. Podhoretz points out, U.S. foreign policy during the Carter era and subsequently has revealed the futility of détente as well as of the Nixon Doctrine. But in dismissing the China card as simply a facet of the Nixon Doctrine, Mr. Podhoretz seems . . . to have taken an overly simplistic view of the motives which underlay the China *démarche,* a view which does less than justice to Kissinger's brilliance as a conceptualizer. Indeed, Mr. Podhoretz's own analysis of Soviet aspirations is inconsistent with his conclusions about China's potential role in U.S. foreign policy. I would suggest that before dismissing the opening to China initiated by the Nixon administration, due consideration should be given to the following:

1. At the time of Kissinger's visit to Beijing, China was a closed book. There was certainly no reason to assume that, in common with Hitler's Germany and the Soviet Union, the Chinese revolutionaries were bent on pursuing "unlimited aims" and offered only the choices of "resistance or submission." It was, and still is, worth probing the Chinese mask to ascertain what expansionist aims, if any, lie behind it.

2. There were at least sufficient indications at the time that coexistence with China might not pose the same insuperable problems it did with the Soviets; the lessons of the Vietnamese war, not to mention the obvious case of Hong Kong, might legitimately have engendered a degree of optimism.

3. Although the number of Soviet divisions pinned down on the Chinese border might not have increased as a result of Kissinger's overtures, may it not be realistic to assume that a China which has been given some measure of assurance of American sympathy and economic assistance in the event of Soviet aggression is less likely to be conciliatory in its dealings with the Soviet Union, thereby significantly reducing the possibility of the West's being ultimately confronted by a Moscow-Peking axis?

4. To assume that it is impossible for the American people to comprehend the necessity and rationality of adopting two separate and distinct policies toward two Communist regimes that are (at least potentially) distinguishable, is grossly to underestimate, I would hope, both the ability of the State Department to articulate its motives and the average citizen's instinctive pragmatism.

5. The difference between an implacable enemy whose ideology has as its main objective the ultimate destruction of one's way of life and an ideologue who is prepared to recognize one's right to coexist is obvious.

6. The main obstacle to seeking an accommodation with China, I suggest, is not any inherent inconsistency in the policy, but the much more obvious problem of attempting it in the face of Chinese irredentism. This is the real problem that needs to be addressed and is probably the basic reason, thus far, for the slow progress of U.S.-Chinese relations.

7. Future negotiations with China may yet end in an impasse. Until they do it would be most unwise to dismiss the China opening as part and parcel of the failed Nixon Doctrine.

Finally, one must agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Podhoretz that a reassessment by Kissinger of the events of the past decade could be most valuable. The fact that this assessment, if made, might not be heeded exposes a weakness of our democratic system, which affords brilliant men the opportunity of developing their skills while in office but so often fails to allow them sufficient time to profit from their mistakes. . . .

Keith A. Wilson
Cape Town, South Africa

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "Kissinger Reconsidered," Norman Podhoretz analyzes the errors of Kissinger's diplomacy. He points out that Kissinger saw the USSR as an ordinary nation-state which could be satisfied through negotiation and compromise, yet all evidence indicates that the USSR is a revolutionary state with unlimited aims, like Nazi Germany. . . . Between a party with limited and a party with unlimited aims, the former is bound to lose.

Mr. Podhoretz's remarks gave me a strong feeling of *déjà vu.* Where had I read almost the same thoughts before? I found them in the following passage:

> What is a revolutionary? Were the answer to this question self-evident, only the most moribund societies would ever collapse and few, if any, international orders would be overthrown. . . . Instead, history reveals a strange phenomenon. Time and again states appear which boldly proclaim that their purpose is to destroy the existing structure and to recast it completely. And time and again, the powers that are the declared victims stand by indifferent or inactive, while the balance of power is overturned. Indeed, they tend to explain away the efforts of the revolutionary power to upset the

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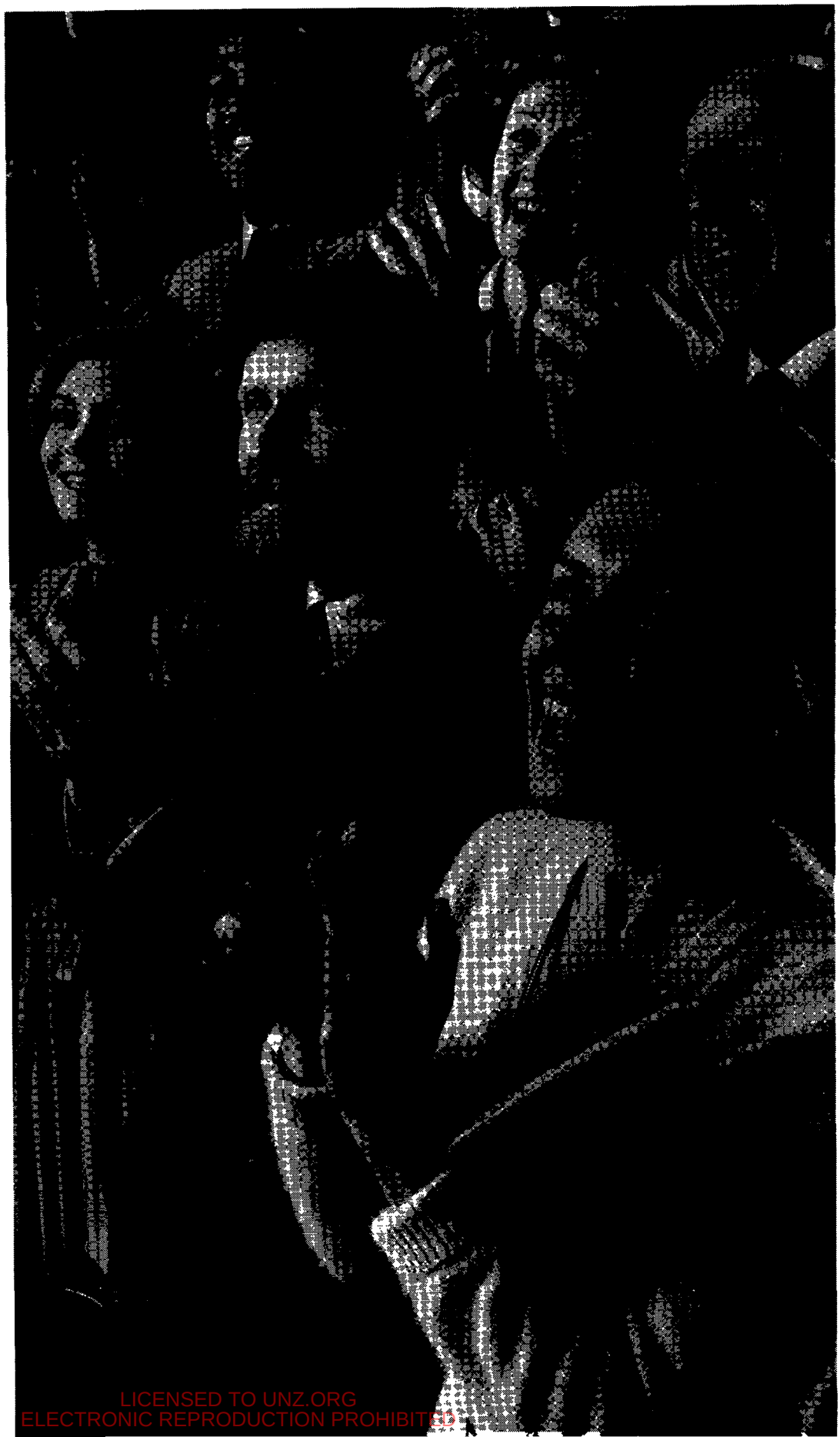

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equilibrium as the expression of limited aims or specific grievances until they discover—sometimes too late and always at excessive cost—that the revolutionary power was perfectly sincere all along. So it was when the French Revolution burst on an unbelieving Europe and when Hitler challenged the system of Versailles. So it has been with the relations of the rest of the world toward the Soviet bloc.

The passage is from Chapter Ten of *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, the 1957 book which raised Henry Kissinger from an obscure college professor to the foremost political thinker of the 1950's. . . .

The passage reads as if Kissinger the diplomat had fallen into the very same trap against which Kissinger the philosopher had warned the West. What could have caused such a paradox? Elsewhere, Kissinger proposed that the compulsive blindness of the "powers that are the declared victims" reflects a basic act of faith that coexisting sovereign governments must make in order to coexist with each other at all. And never is such an "act of faith" so compulsive as when coexistence is indispensable, when war is so terrible that it becomes unthinkable.

Indeed, the media made quite a point, when Kissinger took over the job of National Security Adviser, of his concern for "keeping the earth alive." For him as for his predecessors, then, there was no alternative to peace. And it was the years in which "no-alternative-to-peace" was our overwhelming priority that witnessed the triumphant rise of first Nazi Germany, then Soviet Russia.

Thus a reasonable corollary to Kissinger's tenth chapter (not to mention Kissinger's diplomatic career) might well be the following: when there is no alternative to peace, nothing can stop the revolutionaries. . . .

ALFRED B. MASON
Hydesville, California

Economists

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The main contribution of Melville J. Ulmer's article ["What Economists Know," July]... is to substantiate once again the dictum of the contemporary English philosopher, Karl Popper, to the effect that social planners should be cautious in their social engineering lest they make a bad situation worse. This applies as much to Reaganites as it did to advocates of the Great Society. For economics, in the words of John Stuart Mill, is an "inexact science": this means that its postulates would hold true only if extraneous events and factors did not interfere in the proper working out of the predicted economic scenario. . . . But there is no way for economists to predict such events, whose cumulative effect, eventually, is to transform the structure of the economy itself. This further compounds forecasting, because a specific economic model that worked reasonably well in the past for both prediction and policy formulation may begin to generate misleading and undesirable consequences. Thus, no matter how much in the way of economic statistics are generated by governmental and private bodies (which, after all, only tell us about past performance), our specific economic models can never provide us with a completely reliable projection of what will happen in the future....

The problem is not only that of the limitations of economic theory. At times, politicians sacrifice economic necessity for political expediency: thus, taxes were not raised in 1965 to finance the Vietnam buildup, possibly initiating our current inflationary woes, and there is substantial pussyfooting in the present Congress about making necessary changes in Social Security.

As far as particular policies are concerned, there is far less justification for applying today's "new" supply-side economics than there was for employing measured doses of Keynesian techniques in the postwar period. At least Keynes's theory was something new under the sun and had some degree of *a priori* plausibility. Trickle-down economics, with its uncritical veneration of the market, is old hat—it led to the debacle of 1929 and is not likely to solve the problems of the 80's.

STAN KOUTOUZOS
Sunnyside, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The central tenet of economic theory is that man acts to advance his personal happiness, as he himself defines it. Melville J. Ulmer quotes with approval Irving Kristol's formulation, the first part of which reads: "The overwhelming majority of men and women are naturally and incorrigibly interested in improving their material condition." Mr. Ulmer remarks that, with the exception of the intellectual Left, the vast majority would accept this view "as consistent with personal experience and the lessons of history." Mr. Ulmer thus endorses the view that human behavior is explained by an unrelenting and purposive search for material things.

But such a view of human behavior is at variance with the views of all the other social sciences as well as with the Jewish experience. In recognition of this, a number of economic theorists have broadened the concept of self-interest to include adherence to an ideology, in order to explain unrequited altruism. According to this revised formulation, the pain of guilt and remorse for behavior which offends one's being, and the joys of unrequited giving, are to be included in the calculus of economic decision-making. Withal, economic behavior is still viewed as rationally egocentric and individualistic.

For me, as a Jew, this revised formulation remains unsatisfactory. Even if the Jewish sages did not tell me so, . . . I know that I am part of a community of Jews—past, present, and future. If I fail in my obligations as a Jew, I suffer guilt. How can I be egocentric, rational, and free, when I am compelled . . . to fulfill ethical mandates placed on the Jewish community?

What is true for me, . . . and for Mr. Ulmer, . . . who was my mentor four decades ago, is undoubtedly true for all mankind. Each of us, as a social animal, is part of one or more collectivities. By conditioning or otherwise, we act in solidarity with our group. . . .

The implication of this is therefore contrary to what Irving Kristol asserts in the remainder of the passage quoted by Mr. Ulmer. Kristol says that only if the marketplace is permitted to rule can we improve our material existence, while preserving freedom. Thus, Judaism has nothing to say about our economy, except to hold its tongue; Judaism is relegated to family life or to the support of Jewish causes. Mr. Ulmer does not go this far. He recognizes that an unmanaged economy is subject to business cycles, but is wary of state intervention in economic affairs. He does not apply a social-moral test to economic affairs, although, of course, he exercises moral judgments on the acts of individuals.

As an economist, I am cognizant of economic breakdowns caused by technical deficiencies in the market mechanism. As a social scientist, I am informed of the norms of certain groups in our society (e.g., corporate managers) and feel them to be in-

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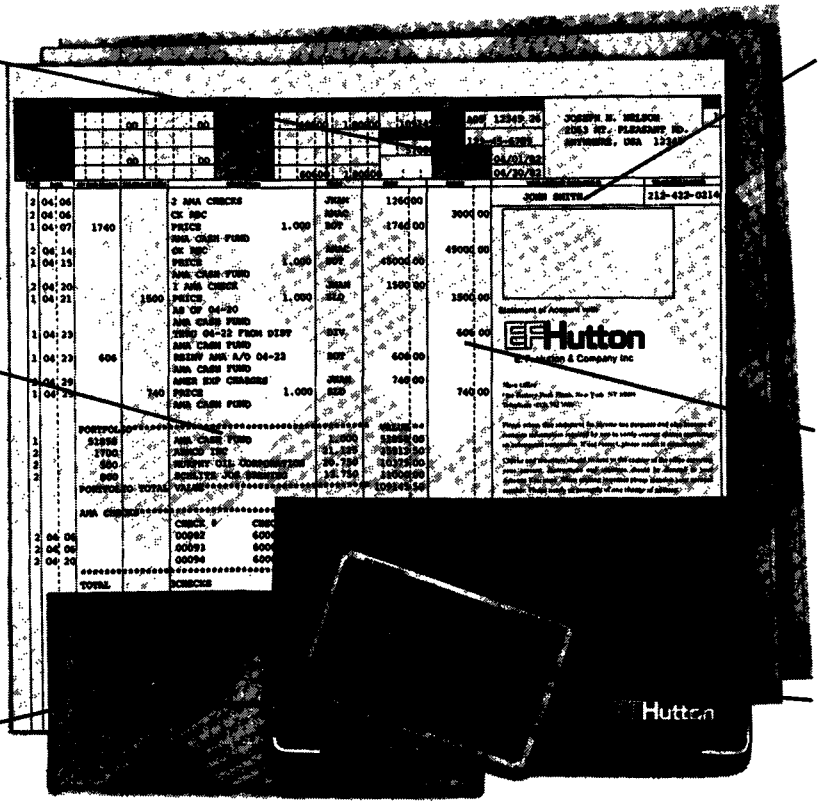

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compatible with market efficiency. As a student of human behavior, I observe the violations of even those codes which do exist, partly because individuals working for corporations sometimes accept no moral responsibility for their own acts. As a Jew, I have a moral view not only of acts of individuals but of the mode of operation of a society.

Having made a moral judgment about how our economy operates, I am under an obligation to act. If I were rich, I could perhaps content myself with charitable acts. But since I am by profession and nature a teacher, my moral obligation is to spread my understanding of how the economy does work and ought to be corrected. The prerequisite is to make a moral judgment about the operation of our economy. Finding the remedies is another question; I share with Mr. Ulmer a distrust of government intervention in the economy. But an important part of the explanation for counterproductive government intervention in the economy is the subversion of governmental processes by those possessing great economic power. . . .

Mr. Ulmer's summary of the state of economic learning, while excellent as a report on the subject as traditionally understood, is inadequate in that it fails to present economic theory within the broader context of philosophical systems and the social sciences. . . .

MONROE BURK
Columbia, Maryland

MELVILLE J. ULMER writes:

Looking in the mirror, some people see only what they want to. In widely different ways, Messrs. Koutouzos and Burk serve as apt illustrations. Stan Koutouzos is an advocate of the now largely discredited neo-Keynesian approach to economic policy. Hence he perceives in its failures mainly insufficient caution on the part of "planners," the weakness of politicians, and the inherent limitations of an "inexact science." No doubt they all contributed.

Nevertheless, my article traced the economic failures of the past, during as well as before the reign of Keynes, to a much more important, currently relevant, and demonstrable source: the role of doctrinal *faith*, as opposed to reason and experience, in the formation of influential opinions on both the Left and the Right. In addition, I explained why, in terms of political biases as well as professional self-interest, these opposing faiths proved seductive enough to survive the repeated contradictory lessons of history. Without this insight, it would remain inexplicable how leading neo-Keynesians can insist to this day that they possess the key to prosperity.

It is true that I also implied a methodological critique, of which Mr. Koutouzos takes note, though I am afraid that he misunderstood that too. There is nothing wrong, *per se*, in reasoning from postulates, but useful knowledge can be won in the social sciences only when abstract deductions are disciplined by the empirical evidence of an ever-evolving world. Mr. Koutouzos apparently believes that static rigidity, and hence unrealistic assumptions, are inherent in the discipline's methodology. There are too many examples to the contrary for him to be correct. One outstanding illustration appears in the work of Wesley C. Mitchell (mentioned in my article), whose instrumental techniques successfully and consciously overcame Mr. Koutouzos's "inherent" limitation. Thankfully there are many others in the past and present who have operated in that same tradition.

As a moralist, Monroe Burk is impressed in my quoted passage from Irving Kristol only by the *absence* of a reference to ethical standards in human behavior, an interpretation a bit like rejecting a cardiogram for not revealing an abscessed gum. For neither Kristol nor Adam Smith (whose work Kristol was summarizing) overlooks ethics. In fact Smith devoted an entire volume, a predecessor to his more famous *Wealth of Nations*, to stressing the role of "sympathy" in personal relations. The simple message of the Kristol quotation is that self-interest is an attribute so common and pronounced in human economic behavior that it should be utilized in public policy, and not summarily blocked. Other interests, whether in compassion, love, or power, are not excluded. Nothing in "Jewish experience" or Christian experience, so far as I know, denies this.

The remainder of Mr. Burk's letter I find confused and possibly dangerous. I was apparently not convincing enough as his teacher (though I must confess I remember

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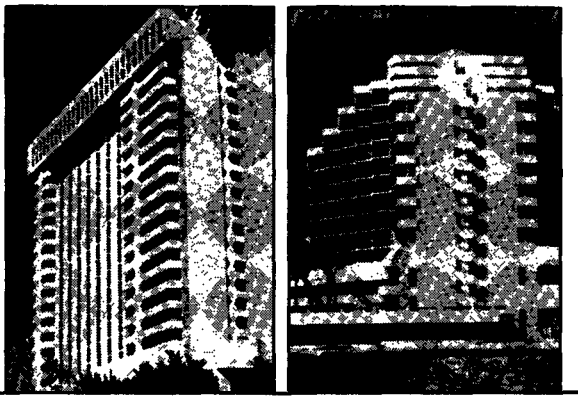

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him only as a fellow faculty member during my first two or three years of teaching) to impart the distinction, in judging public policy, between the verifiable weighing of actual or potential *consequences* for people in taking action *A* or *B*, and the contrasting simpler, but treacherous, procedure of appealing to moral authority. The weighing of consequences is in part a technical process that cannot be skipped in any case. What effect, for example, would abolition of the minimum-wage law have on total employment, on the employment of teenagers, on the prevailing wage for unskilled labor, on the price level, and on the nation's output? But, in part, the weighing of consequences also embraces moral considerations, and these practically always require *a balancing of shared but competing values*. No respected moral goal of significance in economic policy—whether it be personal security, personal freedom, a right to a job, a right to a decent living, a right to profit by one's talent, diligence, or property—is in itself absolute and without some qualification. Nor can any one of them be blithely ignored.

The danger lies in those who overlook the pluralism of values—the wild-eyed fanatics, mesmerized by their own presumptive rectitude, who would impose on the populace their most sacred code for behavior to the exclusion of others. Mr. Burk may complain of corporate power, but the most awesome power of all resides in such inspired minorities or resolute majorities who, in the words of a John Dos Passos character, "can command control of the means of coercion and the network of communications. . . ." One would expect that elementary democratic principles, no less than Jewish experience, would have warned Mr. Burk against that.

Finally, I don't know what gave him the notion that I (or Irving Kristol) embrace laissez-faire. Of course I value the free market, and consider it essential for both personal freedom and efficiency. I'm also convinced that mistaken laws and regulations of the past have inhibited its potential contributions, at a substantial cost to all Americans. But even Adam Smith and Milton Friedman concede, pragmatically, that in economic affairs the state must play a significant role. It happens, as Mr. Burk must surely have known, that I would go well beyond either of those two in acknowledging the need for public intervention. What he apparently does not know is that any merit accorded to my position, versus theirs, would have to rest on a judgment of experience, on past and anticipated consequences, and certainly not on a claim to superior morals.

Richard Pryor

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Richard Grenier's article on Richard Pryor ["Black Comedy," June] is simply the best essay I have read concerning Pryor. Mr. Grenier points out a major problem that has haunted black intellectuals and creative artists. It is our inability to confront ethnic sacred cows. In the case of Pryor it is his concerted romanticization of Africa. Mr. Grenier is absolutely correct in calling attention to the dishonesty in Pryor's statement, "There are no niggers in Africa." In fact, as a political scientist I am always drawn to the way in which the word "free" is consistently misused by both the Left and the Right. The Right of course uses it capriciously in regard to any anti-Communist regime. But the Left tosses the word around in reference to African nations in which all that one can say is that there exists in these countries a ruling oligarchy composed of indigenous figures. That is, Zaire is considered "free" simply because Mobutu is a native of the nation, etc., etc. Yet who (among the Left, Right, etc.) would consider Chile free merely because Pinochet is from Chile? The point may seem trivial but it isn't. . . .

In any case, black intellectuals have a long way to go before we become truly "honest." But if I may suggest that the problem exists within all ethnic intellectual circles, let me do so without minimizing the gravity of the problem for blacks. In other words, Jewish and Irish Catholic intellectuals have a tremendous burden in honestly confronting the activities of Israel or the Irish Republican Army. One often reads justifications of Israel's and/or the IRA's behavior that could only have come from the pen of someone constrained by ethnic sacred cows.

JERRY G. WATTS
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

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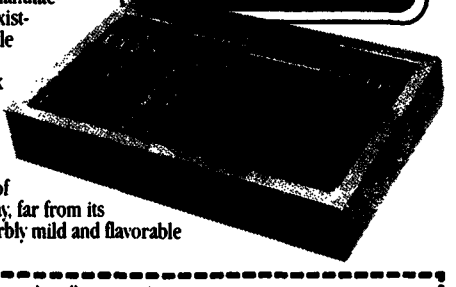

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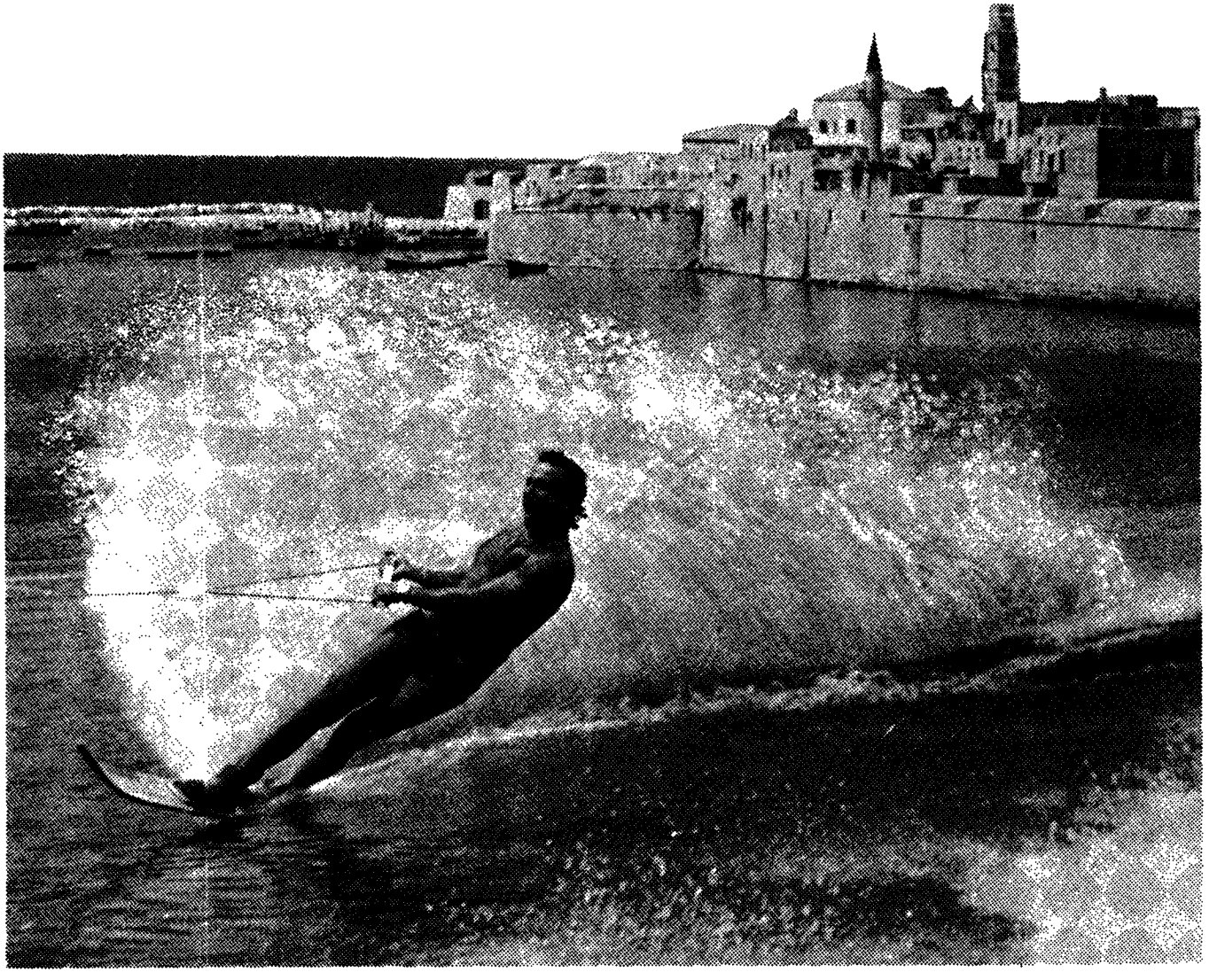

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Lebanon: The Case for the War

Robert W. Tucker

EACH OF the Arab-Israeli wars has been distinctive. Each has developed in ways that confounded the expectations of observers and each has given rise to consequences that were unforeseen at the time. The war in Lebanon followed this pattern. Although an Israeli strike into Lebanon had long been expected, and although the prospect was anticipated that a move against the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) would also lead to a clash between Israeli and Syrian forces, the manner in which the war in fact unfolded took almost everyone by surprise.

I

A PREOCCUPATION with the siege of Beirut and the fate of the PLO has partially obscured the significance of the encounter between Israeli and Syrian forces. In retrospect, this encounter may well be seen as the more important side of the war. Certainly from a military perspective this is the case. The results of the brief but decisive conflict between Israeli and Syrian forces must alter the calculations not only of the states of the region but of the superpowers as well. The triumph of Israeli forces dispelled the doubt and uncertainty that had lingered since the 1973 war. Both in the air and on the ground, the qualitative superiority of American and of Israeli weapons was striking. The threat once posed to Israel's air supremacy in the region by Soviet surface-to-air missiles has been exorcised. So, too, the effectiveness of the antitank weapons employed against Syrian forces was apparent.

The point has been repeatedly made that Syria's forces did not have the latest and best Soviet arms and that the Syrians did not employ the weapons they did have to best advantage. But this point can have little relevance to the Israeli destruction of Soviet missiles. The methods used to destroy these missiles would be equally effective against more recent Soviet missiles operated by Soviet personnel. Nor, for that matter, is the relevance of the point apparent with respect to the vulnerability of Soviet armor, even though operated by Syrians.

The outcome of the Israeli-Syrian duel indicates that the quantitative advantages the Soviets enjoy today in their air and tank forces may prove much less significant than many have assumed. If so, the implications of the battles fought in eastern Lebanon may prove quite as significant for the military balance in Europe as they are for the military balance in the Middle East. Finally, it is clear that the war did not enhance the Soviet reputation as the world's leading arms supplier.

The encounter between Israel and Syria was an example—and a classic one at that—of limited war. It is true that the Yom Kippur war of 1973 was also a limited conflict. In the 1973 war, however, it was by no means apparent to the Israelis that their opponents had taken up arms for limited ends. At the time, it appeared that Israel's very survival might be at stake. Only in retrospect did the true character of Arab aims become clearer. In 1982, the limited purposes of both sides were made quite clear at the outset. The immediate Israeli aims were to remove the threat posed by the Syrian missile emplacements in the Bekaa Valley and to push Syrian forces back to a position where they no longer constituted a protective screen for PLO forces.

Beyond these aims the Israelis would probably have welcomed the opportunity to force the Syrians from eastern Lebanon, had this been possible without paying too great a price and had the Syrians given them sufficient provocation. But the Syrians carefully avoided giving such provocation. At the same time, they clearly conveyed the message that the Israelis would have to pay a considerable price to drive them out of eastern Lebanon. The Syrian aims were to require the Israelis to pay a respectable price for pushing them back to eastern Lebanon, thereby avoiding the appearance of humiliation, and, above all, to retain a foothold in eastern Lebanon. The result was an impressive demonstration that a war between the Jewish state and its principal remaining Arab adversary can be not only quite deliberately limited but almost stylized in its restraints. This occurred, moreover, despite the

ROBERT W. TUCKER, whose articles on the Middle East have been appearing regularly in COMMENTARY since 1975, is professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins. His latest books are *The Purposes of American Power: An Essay in National Security* and (with David Hendrickson) *The Fall of the First British Empire: The Origins of the American Revolution*, which Johns Hopkins will publish next month.

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virtual absence of pressure on either side by its respective superpower patron.

By comparison with the Syrian-Israeli encounter, the action taken against the PLO holds little military interest. Throughout southern Lebanon, the PLO offered no more than nominal resistance to the Israelis. The almost immediate collapse of PLO resistance cannot be adequately accounted for simply by pointing to the very great disparity of forces. This disparity explains the PLO's defeat, but it does not explain the PLO's failure, for example, to have made a serious defense of Beaufort Castle or to have mined the one or two roads in the interior over which Israeli armor had to be transported.

We cannot know what would have happened had the PLO made a determined effort to hold its positions for as long as possible and to impede the Israeli sweep in every way possible. But it is not unreasonable to speculate that had such an effort been made the subsequent course of the war would have been different. Had the Israelis encountered stronger opposition in the beginning, had their advance been impeded by several days, and had their casualties amounted to more than a handful, the sweep northward might well have stopped roughly at the forty-kilometer line, the announced Israeli objective. It was the lightning character of the Israeli move northward, in turn made possible by the virtual absence of any effective opposition, that created a momentum which brought—one might almost say pulled—the Israeli forces to Beirut.

This speculation on why the war against the PLO developed as it did runs somewhat counter to the prevailing view that in invading Lebanon the Israelis were following a well-developed plan, whose principal purpose was the complete destruction of the PLO presence in Lebanon. It was this purpose that presumably took Israeli forces to Beirut and that explained their subsequent actions. Thus, according to this view, the Begin government was intent on dealing a mortal blow to the PLO because it wanted to deal an equally decisive blow to Palestinian nationalism in the West Bank and Gaza. The presence of the PLO in Lebanon was seen by Jerusalem as the one remaining serious challenge to Israeli rule in the occupied territories. Its destruction would settle the Palestinian issue on favorable terms for an indefinite period.

Although this view has been commonly put forth as established fact, it is no more than speculation.* As such, it raises a number of questions that are seldom asked, let alone satisfactorily answered. Perhaps the critical question concerns that central event of the war: the siege of Beirut. If the Israelis had planned to destroy the PLO as a military and political presence in Lebanon, Beirut had to be their principal objective. For the nerve center of the PLO and the bulk of its elite forces were in and around Beirut and had been there for years. Yet what evidence we have points to the conclusion that the Israelis were unprepared —not only militarily but also politically and psychologically—either for laying siege to or for assaulting West Beirut. The military force notorious for its clockwork-like moves and efficiency appeared uncertain of its mission once it approached the Lebanese capital.

The case of Beirut indicates that Israeli objectives expanded with respect to the PLO as a result of the war's unexpectedly swift and easy pace. With respect to the Syrians, the situation appears quite different. Here it is likely that, if anything, Israeli objectives contracted in the course of the war. Although there is little reason to doubt that the Israeli government considered a test of arms with Syria very likely, and planned accordingly, it did so because it assumed that PLO forces could not be separated from Syrian forces, that Syria would not permit such a separation. Of course, if the Syrians were to prove equally determined to resist the Israeli effort, the prospect of a major war in which Damascus might lose its Lebanese position altogether could not be excluded. Certainly, the Israelis could not have viewed it as their duty to preserve the Syrian investment in Lebanon.

As matters turned out, the Syrian government and its astute leader, Hafez Assad, proved far more prudent and elusive than the Israelis appear to have reckoned. Beyond a modest risk, Damascus was unwilling to protect the PLO and to tie its fate to the outcome of events in western Lebanon. It was willing to take considerable risk only to protect its own position in the east and north. Once all this became clear, the prospect of a major war with Syria quickly declined.

II

THE SYRIAN defection apart, the major turning point in the war came with the Israeli failure to storm West Beirut. What held the Israeli army back? Prime Minister Begin has emphasized the message he received at the time from President Reagan urging that the Israelis not force their way into the city. It seems altogether

* Nor is speculation transformed into fact by remarks of flamboyant cabinet ministers. In several statements during the war, and particularly in an interview with Oriana Fallaci at the close of the war (Washington *Post*, August 29, 1982), Defense Minister Ariel Sharon related that he made a trip to Beirut in January of this year. Sharon's professed purpose in making the trip was "to study the situation. I always do it. I mean, I always prepare myself accurately. I detest improvisation." Sharon does not expressly say what he wanted to study and why. But the evident implication is that he was intent on destroying the PLO presence in Lebanon and therefore had to devise a plan for dealing with the PLO in Beirut. What that plan might have been Sharon does not say. Instead, he simply affirms his reluctance from the outset to avoid entering Beirut unless it was "absolutely indispensable," in which case "nobody in the world would have stopped me."

Until a great deal more is known about the history of the war, we can only conclude that Sharon's statements are self-serving. Despite the more than occasional identification of his person with the government of Israel, he is not the government and his reconstruction of events is not to be taken as official history.

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doubtful, though, that this could have been the principal reason for staying the Israelis' hand. The message was sent at a time when Washington's sympathies with the Israeli move into Lebanon were only barely disguised; when the Reagan administration had not as yet committed its prestige to a diplomatic resolution of the problem of removing PLO forces from West Beirut; and when the Arab countries—particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia—had yet to regain their composure and begin to apply pressure on Washington for an outcome that would somehow save the PLO as a political, if not as a military, entity. In these circumstances, the government in Jerusalem might have pushed into West Beirut without paying a heavy price in its relations with the United States. Mr. Begin's explanation might have the ring of persuasiveness if applied to a later period of the siege; it does not when applied to the initial stage.

Alternatively, it has been argued that the Israelis initially held back from attacking the PLO in West Beirut out of the mistaken conviction that such an attack was unnecessary. In this view, Jerusalem relied on its Lebanese Christian allies to enter West Beirut and deal with the PLO. So far as it goes, this explanation appears persuasive. The difficulty is that it does not go far enough. For if the Israelis had counted on the Phalangists to break the PLO position in West Beirut—and the evidence indicates that for a limited period this was their expectation—they were soon disappointed. Yet once it had become apparent that they could not count on the Phalangist forces to take on the PLO, they still did not move.

These considerations suggest that Israeli forces stopped before Beirut principally because they had no prior intention—certainly no fixed intention—of entering the city. The initial reaction to the sudden and unexpected prospect of dealing not a severe and crippling but a mortal blow to the PLO was to cast about for a more palatable alternative to an Israeli attack on the enemy's redoubt. When this failed to materialize, hesitation persisted and for a number of reasons, among which American opposition was, in the beginning, probably not more than of secondary importance. A reluctance to take the casualties that would have to be paid was undoubtedly very important. To this must be added a simple reluctance to storm what is, after all, an Arab capital, an act that would have been unprecedented in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Once the initial stages of the siege had passed, the weight of American opposition grew. Whether it would have been decisive in staying Israel's hand had the negotiations not eventuated in terms satisfactory to Jerusalem nevertheless remains doubtful. For the Israeli government's determination to press for a successful outcome to the siege had grown. What had at first been an unintended and unexpected prospect the price of which, when it suddenly materialized, gave the Israelis serious pause, subsequently became an indispensable objective without whose realization the entire war would have been in vain.

This belated expansion of objectives repeated an experience as old as the history of war. Having created a new situation by their action, the Israelis somehow had to come to terms with it. In the end, however, there appeared to be no way of doing so satisfactorily save by an expansion of the objectives for which the war initially had been undertaken. The protracted course of the negotiations alone insured this result. For the longer the negotiations went on the more Jerusalem stood to lose if they did not end on roughly the terms that Israel had demanded. Even had they ended on terms satisfactory to the Begin government, there would have remained the PLO claim that it had withstood the Israeli army for a longer period than any other Arab army had ever been able to do. The hesitation of the Israelis to go into West Beirut because of the casualties they might suffer managed to give this claim a semblance of plausibility, particularly in Arab eyes.

To this had to be added the consideration that with every passing day of the negotiations the standing of the PLO as a political entity in its own right, capable of negotiating in the manner of any sovereign government, was growing. It is true that what the PLO was negotiating over were the terms by which it was to be deprived of its territorial base—the asset without which it could no longer function as an independent military force. But that fact was not widely seen to imply that the PLO was also negotiating the terms of its demise as a political entity. On the contrary, as the negotiations proceeded, the paradox seemed to arise of a process that might end one life (military) of the PLO only to strengthen its other life (political).

The paradox is only apparent. There is no way that the PLO can find through its own resources a renewed political life after a military death. If it is to have any kind of lease on life at all, this will have to come through the efforts of a third-party protector—and the only serious candidate for this role is the United States. The PLO leadership understood this at a very early stage in the negotiations. Thus its determined effort to exact a political price from the United States in the form of some kind of recognition for a peaceful withdrawal. Thus also, the equally determined effort of the Israeli government to prevent this price from being paid.

The two parties were not mistaken in taking the positions they did. If America does not resurrect the PLO, it can no longer have a meaningful political life. This is one of the lessons of the war and of the negotiations which brought the war to an end.

III

At the same time, this is also the lesson that Israel's critics reject. In part, their rejection rests on grounds that are moral rather

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than political in character and stems from the conviction that Israel had no right to wage a war—and, above all, to lay siege to West Beirut—in order to destroy the PLO. The moral critique is important because what has so often been presented as hard-headed political analysis is, when its surface is once scratched, moral preference masquerading as political analysis.

Why is it that the Israeli government is considered to have had no right to seek the destruction of the PLO? The answer cannot be that this purpose violated elementary humanitarian standards that even adversaries in war may not transgress. No Israeli claim was advanced of a right to destroy individuals because of their racial or ethnic or religious origins. No claim was even advanced of a right to destroy individuals because of their political beliefs or attachments. Indeed, no claim was advanced of a right to attack individuals *qua* individuals for any reason other than their status as combatant members of an enemy armed force. The Israeli objective in Lebanon—and in Beirut—was no more and no less than the objective of any belligerent: the surrender or the destruction of the enemy's armed forces. If this objective is illegitimate, then the objective of any armed force in war is also illegitimate.

Clearly, this cannot be what most critics of the war have in mind in condemning it. If the war is deemed unjust, it is either because the means by which it was pursued are considered to have transgressed recognized international standards, or because the purposes for which the war was undertaken—*and* for which the destruction of PLO forces was sought—are deemed illegitimate. In principle, this distinction between the means employed in war and the purposes sought by war appears clear enough. In practice, this may not be the case, for the judgments men make on the means of war are almost invariably colored by their judgments on the purposes or ends of war. The war in Lebanon affords a striking example of this. It is largely because the purposes for which the Israeli government is presumed to have undertaken war are condemned that Israel has been held to standards of conduct in war which no belligerent has lived up to in all the wars of the past half century.

The insistence upon imposing standards of conduct that would condemn almost any action taken against an enemy force proximate to a civilian population was apparent from the outset of the conflict. In the sweep to the north, Israeli forces were widely accused of inflicting very heavy casualties on the civilian population and, indeed, of waging indiscriminate warfare. When these accusations were later shown to have been unfounded, and when instead it became increasingly apparent that considerable efforts to discriminate between armed forces and civilian population had been made, the siege of Beirut had set in and critics were able to turn their attention to what appeared a more promising case of injustice.

Did the Israeli forces have a right to lay siege to Beirut? If the larger issues bearing on the justice of the war itself are once set aside, the answer seems reasonably clear. In laying siege to Beirut to compel the surrender of the PLO forces occupying and defending the western portion of the city, the Israelis transgressed no recognized international standards. Did they do so, however, by the measures taken in carrying out the siege? Not unless it can be established that they deliberately attacked the noncombatant population of Beirut. In all other respects, the settled and accepted practices governing sieges—hard as they may be—were not violated. Quite the contrary, in this instance the besieging force did not go as far as belligerents have regularly and legally gone in the past. Thus although water and food supplies were interrupted from time to time, they were not permanently cut off. So too, the noncombatant population was allowed, and even urged, to leave West Beirut rather than forced to remain.

In judging whether the injury inflicted on the civilian population of Beirut was the result of measures indiscriminate in character, it is not enough to point to the fact of such injury. This is what the West German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, has done. In charging that in Beirut "people are being killed indiscriminately," Schmidt pointed only to the fact that the civilian population—"women and men who have nothing to do with the war"—was suffering casualties as a result of the Israeli attacks on PLO positions in the city. Yet it has always been accepted that the immunity of noncombatants, and particularly in the case of besieged places, must be seriously qualified if military operations are to be made at all possible. In the case of Beirut, PLO forces went to unusual lengths to mingle with the civilian population. Surely, it cannot be seriously argued that this effort thereby conferred upon them immunity from attack. What can be argued is that the attacking forces were nevertheless obliged to make reasonable efforts to avoid attacking noncombatants.

Did the Israeli forces make such efforts? Until the final stages of the siege, there is what amounts to a *prima facie* case for concluding that they did do so. The places attacked were almost invariably known or long-suspected PLO military positions. Civilian casualties were incurred in the immediate vicinity of such objectives. Moreover, from all that is known, these casualties were of an incidence to be expected when an attacking force is taking even more than reasonable precautions to spare the civilian population from injury. During the period from mid-June to early August, then, the charge of indiscriminate warfare is one made either by those with a special axe to grind or by those who quite simply reject the necessities of war, however well sanctioned these may be by the practice of states.

The charge of indiscriminate warfare is more plausibly made with respect to the last two intense bombardments of West Beirut, those of August 4th

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and 12th. By common testimony, these bombardments were the most severe of the war. According to estimates of Lebanese and PLO officials, each resulted in several hundred civilian casualties. Yet even accepting these estimates, what is noteworthy about them is their modest numbers. Not only do they bear no real comparison in their magnitude with the indiscriminate bombings of cities in World War II,* they also compare quite favorably with measures taken by American forces against civilian centers in the Korean and Vietnam wars. We cannot assume that the level of casualties resulting from the Beirut bombardments is due to an unusually effective system there of civilian protection against aerial and land bombardment. Yet in the absence of this assumption, it is difficult to explain why casualties were not far greater if these last great bombardments of the war were in fact indiscriminate.

Nor is this all. We have the testimony of Lebanese and PLO officials that these last two bombardments—and particularly the action of August 4th—changed the intent of the PLO leadership not to leave Beirut without the political victory that neither the Israelis nor the Americans would grant it and the Arab states would not insist upon (assuming they supported the PLO demands at all). Certainly, until the August 4th bombardment the negotiations showed little promise of succeeding, and primarily for the reason that in a war he had plainly lost, Yasir Arafat was holding out for political concessions that could only result from something approximating military victory.

But suppose the Israelis had not thrown their last thunderbolts and PLO intent had not changed. In these circumstances, the Israelis either would have had to accept political defeat or they would have had to go into West Beirut. Since a military victor does not at the last moment normally accept political defeat, it seems reasonable to assume that the Israelis would have moved against West Beirut. Had they done so, would the resulting civilian casualties have been smaller than those resulting from the bombardments? In all probability, they would have been far greater. And in all probability, the charge would then have gone up on virtually all sides that the ground assault was indiscriminate. There appears to have been no way by which Israel could have successfully concluded the siege of Beirut without incurring the charge of waging indiscriminate warfare.

These considerations are not offered in order to dismiss the issues raised by the Israeli bombardment of West Beirut. Even if the last bombardments of the city did save it from what was the almost certain prospect of a ground assault, the question remains whether these actions were justified *if* they bordered, in their effects, on indiscriminate warfare. It is a difficult and painful question. But most critics are not even interested in raising it, let alone in seriously addressing it. For the answer is all too likely to prove complex and uncertain, whereas what critics evidently want is simplicity and moral certainty. They want, in a word, to condemn the entire siege of Beirut. Hence the charge, made throughout the siege, of indiscriminate warfare.

THE intent behind the instant readiness to charge Israeli forces with waging indiscriminate warfare was also apparent in the most common indictment made of the war and, particularly, of the siege. It is the charge of disproportionality. Applied especially to the siege, the argument is that the resulting death and destruction were disproportionate in their effects to the ends sought by the siege. In the rather arcane language of the moralists, the siege failed to pass the test of a proportionality of value, which requires that the values preserved or gained through force be proportionate to the values sacrificed through force. It is not surprising that this conclusion has been so confidently reached by so many. If the purposes for which force was presumably undertaken in the first place are deemed unjust, a negative judgment on the issue of a proportionality of value is a foregone conclusion. In a war that is unjust by virtue of the ends that are sought, virtually any destruction at all must fail the test of a proportionality of value.

This is why, in the last analysis, critics have insisted upon holding the Israeli conduct of the war to such exacting standards, just as it is why they have regularly found that Israeli forces failed to meet those standards. Candor would be served by clarity on this point, which explains the otherwise absurd and even inexplicable moral condemnation of the Israeli objective to destroy PLO forces in Lebanon. If Israel had no right to pursue this objective it was because the very taking up of arms was considered unjust in that it represented the aggressive pursuit of a policy intent upon denying a people the right of national self-expression. It is the identification of the PLO as the legitimate—if not, indeed, the only possible—representative of Palestinian nationalism that is the basis for condemning the Israeli objective to destroy the PLO.

Yet even if this identification is accepted, it does not follow that the Israeli objective was illegitimate. It may be considered politically unwise or even futile, but this is not to say that it was illegitimate. Even if the people of the West Bank and Gaza are as one with the proclaimed objective of their alleged representatives—which remains the dismemberment of the state of Israel—this would not endow that objective with moral sanctity and thereby condemn Israel for opposing *its armed expression* with force. There is nothing in reason or morality that enjoins a government to refrain from taking action against a threat to the state's security simply because that threat enjoys popular support.

In all likelihood, the assumption that the PLO

* In three raids on Dresden, for example, 35,000 were killed, and in two days of fire-bombing Tokyo, 84,000 were killed and about 45,000 injured.

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represents the will of the Palestinians in the occupied territories is, if not simply unfounded, a considerable exaggeration of the reality. But even if it were not, the issue considered here would remain unaffected. For that issue does not turn on the representative character of the PLO. Instead, it must turn on the ends as well as on the means of the PLO. Unless critics are prepared to insist that the proclaimed objectives of the PLO were not their real objectives, and that there was no serious intent on the part of the leadership to use its territorial base in Lebanon to implement these objectives by force of arms, the moral case against seeking the destruction of PLO forces must fall.

IV

THE political critique the war has provoked is not new. Almost every element of it traces a now well-worn path. What the war has done is to give a familiar critique a new momentum and, in the eyes of its adherents, a new urgency.

The point of departure of critics of the war is that the Israeli strategy—whatever one's moral judgment of it—simply will not work. Events will prove that the objectives for which the war was undertaken are unrealizable and that the war is instead likely to contribute to consequences a prudent Israeli policy should be at pains to avoid.

Thus the Israeli military victory over the PLO is seen as pyrrhic. Even if the war were to succeed in ending the PLO's existence as a military organization, it cannot succeed in ending its political existence. What it instead will do in this view is lead to the emergence of a more intransigent and radical leadership, one that is likely to be more dispersed and much more committed to terrorist methods. For the war can only demonstrate to the moderate leadership within the PLO, of which Yasir Arafat is presumably the exemplar, that moderation is futile and that the efforts of recent years to restrict terrorism and gain international support have not paid. Instead of eliciting Israeli offers to negotiate a new status for the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza in which the PLO would play a leading role, these efforts brought Israeli tanks and a determination to crush the organization once and for all in the expectation that with its disappearance Palestinian nationalism would be contained and the Begin government could impose its version of autonomy. But just as this futile attempt to destroy the PLO will only lead to its reappearance in a far more intransigent and radical form, so too the attempt to contain Palestinian nationalism—so this analysis continues—will only lead to greater resistance in the occupied territories and to the need for more repressive measures by the occupant.

If these are found to be the all too likely effects of the war on the PLO and the Palestinian people, the effects on the Arab world beyond are cast in similar terms. The war must discredit the forces of moderation in the Arab world who bet on the prospect that a reasonable compromise could be struck with Israel. Conversely, it will give new credibility to the forces of rejectionism and of radicalism. The Sadat strategy has in this view been dealt a severe, perhaps irreparable, blow and there is reason for wondering whether the Mubarak government will survive the results. Even if it does, it will no longer be able to pursue the Sadat strategy, for now more than ever this will make the Cairo government appear an accomplice to the Israeli design. Egypt can only break out of the difficult position that Jerusalem's action has placed it in by conceding, in large measure, the position of those who opposed Sadat's course from the outset. And what applies to Egypt must apply in spades to those—above all, the Saudis—who had given signs of late that they were moving toward Egypt's position but could do so only slowly and cautiously in view of their vulnerability.

The war in Lebanon in this interpretation must therefore strengthen those forces in the Arab world that, for whatever reasons, have a stake in the perpetuation of the conflict with the Jewish state. The result will scarcely dismay the Begin government, for this government welcomes a result that serves as a justification for its grand expansionist design. But the price of a policy that finds its latest expression in the Lebanese war is one that falls not only upon the Israelis. By strengthening those forces inimical to American interests in the Middle East, it also imposes a considerable price upon the United States and one that is only likely to grow.

The political critique of the war accordingly ends on a theme that has invariably marked past critiques of an American policy considered to be held in thralldom to Israeli interests. On this view, the war has shown with almost blinding clarity that the relationship with Israel must be reformed before America's influence in the Arab world is entirely lost and the nation's vital interests in the Mideast further imperiled. If this reformation requires the application of unprecedented pressures on the Jewish state, the latest behavior of the Begin government is found to have left Washington with no alternative. The invasion of Lebanon is the clearest warning to date that the confrontation so long avoided by Washington can no longer be put off if the integrity of American policy is to be preserved. In the words of George W. Ball, we are left today with only "two realistic options: either Israel fully consults us before launching military adventures, discards its expansionist ambitions and gets on with serious peace discussions that contemplate ultimate self-determination for the Palestinians or we must terminate our current relation of indulgent Big Brother and treat it no differently from any other friendly nation" (New York *Times*, July 28, 1982).

V

IF THIS is a fair summary of the prevailing political critique of the war, what can we say of it? The first thing that can be said

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is that it is not based upon the avowed Israeli objectives in going to war but upon an assumed unavowed objective. The avowed Israeli objectives were, initially, to rid southern Lebanon of the PLO presence, and, subsequently, to destroy the PLO as a viable entity either by crushing it in battle or by insisting that it abandon its territorial base in Lebanon. In the prevailing political critique of the war, however, the former objective is seen as mere rationalization and the latter is considered as incidental to the "real" objective: the crushing of Palestinian nationalism in the West Bank and Gaza. It is this putative objective that accounts for the adverse political judgment of the war by critics. For this objective, they constantly remind us, is beyond Israel's reach. Therefore the war must be judged, at best, a futile enterprise.

The purpose of this singular emphasis on Israel's supposedly real, though unavowed, objective is clear enough. It is designed to support a directed verdict on the war. If the suppression of Palestinian nationalism, in whatever form, is the acid test by which the war must be judged, that judgment cannot be materially affected by pointing to other and avowed objectives, above all, to the destruction of the PLO. For the achievement of these other objectives would not alter our overall judgment of the war; we would still be obliged to consider them in the light of the one objective that is as morally odious as it is politically vain. Once again, though by a slightly different route, we have been led to a condemnation of the war by way of the identification made between the PLO and the aspirations, however pacific, of the Palestinian Arab people.

A QUITE different political judgment on the war will be reached if we instead look to Israel's avowed objectives and ask whether they are realizable and, if so, the price that they are likely to entail. Since the principal avowed objective was the destruction of the PLO, a political judgment of the war must turn, in the first place, on the future of the organization. If, as earlier argued, the PLO does not have any real promise of a future that is comparable to its past, then the political verdict critics have passed on the war must be revised.

The case for believing that the PLO will not survive the war in a form that bears a serious resemblance to its past can be simply put. The PLO's status and influence are critically dependent on the possession of an independent territorial base. This it never really enjoyed before coming to Lebanon. During its brief period in Jordan it did begin to gain such a base, but it was this very prospect and the consequences flowing from it that led the Jordanian government in 1970 to measures resulting in the PLO's expulsion. Only in Lebanon has it enjoyed this indispensable prerequisite of military and political power. And it is only in Lebanon that it displayed those characteristics we identify with a state and acquired the standing it finally did.

In the wake of the war, however, it is as certain as anything can be in politics that the PLO will not again enjoy an independent territorial base. The reason is that none of the Arab states to which PLO forces have been sent will permit this to happen. Lebanon excepted (because it was helpless), none permitted it to happen in the past. Moreover, given the now weakened and fragmented character of the PLO, it cannot hope to pressure any of the governments receiving its forces into conceding what was not conceded when the PLO's star appeared to be rising.

Of course a government receiving PLO forces might permit these forces to use its territory as a base for planning and carrying out hostile operations against Israel. But even if this were to happen, it would not signal that the PLO had regained its former status but only that the host government had decided, for purposes largely of its own, to permit PLO forces to operate from its territory. Whether this prospect can be regarded as a meaningful one is more than doubtful. Even in the past, Arab states, particularly those bordering Israel, have been reluctant to play this always risky game. Now the risks of playing it, in the form of Israeli retaliation, have risen very sharply while the possible gains, never considerable, have correspondingly diminished. One may go further and say that the meaning of the Israeli move into Lebanon is that the game is no longer to be tolerated at all, and clearly not by any of the states bordering Israel. Nor is there reason to believe that any of these states, Syria included, will be disposed to challenge this new disposition of Jerusalem.

If this estimate of the PLO's military future is sound, it is difficult to see how the organization can nevertheless retain the political status it has enjoyed for the past decade. The contrary view that the military decline of the PLO will not result in its political decline as well, that the PLO may now even enjoy an enhanced political status, must assume that in this instance political power is not vitally dependent on military power. On what, then, might it be dependent? There is, of course, the much discussed prospect that in the wake of the Lebanese war the PLO will resort to the most extreme of terrorist methods and that it will do so with a determination never before experienced. This "extremism of extremism, terrorism of terrorism," in the words of former Lebanese Prime Minister Saeb Salam, will presumably threaten the Arab world with violence and instability. Anxious to avoid the threat, Arab governments are expected to respond by affording new support for PLO objectives and to pressure Western governments to do so as well.

This is, to say the least, a very unlikely scenario. It requires us to credit the prospect that an organization gravely weakened by military defeat, broken into many now separate fragments, and more dependent than ever on the sufferance of those countries granting asylum to its units, will nevertheless recoup an independent status by threatening its

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hosts. To the extent this threat is directed against Israel rather than against Arab governments, it must raise those prospects already discussed—above all, that Israel will now hold directly accountable any Arab government permitting the PLO to launch terrorist operations from its territory against the Jewish state.

THERE REMAINS the possibility that the PLO's political fortunes will be revived despite its military defeat because the Arab and Western worlds will accord to it a new sympathy and support. This is the prospect of a world that restores the PLO's political status not because it is frightened by the threat of terrorism but because its concern has been awakened as never before to the Palestinians' plight. The PLO is expected to benefit from this awakening because it will continue to be seen, perhaps now more than before, as the embodiment of Palestinian aspirations.

The experience of the war does not afford much reason for taking this prospect seriously. The Arab world that Yasir Arafat waited for in West Beirut almost until the end did not come to his aid. Instead, it did virtually nothing during the weeks when the noose was being tightened around West Beirut. When it finally bestirred itself to make representations to Washington, it did so without notable threats. Only with visible reluctance did any of the principal Arab states consent to receive PLO forces on its territory. Unable in the end to refuse asylum, in view of the consequences to which such refusal might lead, each sought to further its own interests with Washington in giving the PLO entry. Even then, in each instance entry was granted only on terms that insured the complete subordination of PLO units to the host state.

The passivity, bordering on indifference, of the Arab world to the fate of the PLO has been set down to the present disunity of the Arab states, to the fear many entertain of Iran, to the erosion of the oil weapon, and, more generally, to a sense of impotence that leads to resignation. No doubt, each of these factors contributes to explaining the Arab reaction. Taken separately or together, however, they still fail to account for the extent of this reaction. If the Arab states had been as committed to the PLO as their rhetoric suggested, and as the Western world was disposed to believe, a good deal more could and doubtless would have been done—or at least attempted—to succor the organization held to embody the aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs.

That so little was in fact done can only be indicative of the true attitude held by most Arab states toward the PLO. Unwilling to court the charge of openly abandoning the organization to which they had entrusted leadership in the struggle to liberate Palestine for the possession of its "lawful Palestinian owner," as the text of the 1974 Rabat summit conference reads, they contented themselves with affording verbal support to the besieged PLO. This response was more than the triumph of each Arab state's respective reason of state over the commitment to a now dying symbol of the Arab cause. In abandoning the PLO in its moment of supreme need, the Arab states were settling scores with an organization that had become, for different reasons, an unwanted problem for almost all of them.

Eventually, the plain meaning of the message sent by the Arab world will be understood in the West. When it is, we may expect that Western governments at least will react by moving away from the PLO, even if some Western elites show more reluctance to do so. For governments respond to pragmatic considerations, even if they are at times slow to comprehend these considerations. In moving toward the PLO in the course of the 1970's, the governments of Western Europe did so not so much in the conviction that the PLO was the effective, let alone the only possible, representative of the Palestinian Arabs as in the conviction that the Arab states were strongly committed to the PLO and that vital Western interests in the Arab world would be furthered by endorsing this commitment. Once the lesson has sunk in that the commitment of the Arab states had been exaggerated out of all proportion to the reality, a change in policy is bound to occur.

These are the reasons, then, why any wager on the PLO's future today must be considered a very bad one. Ultimately the victim of Israeli arms, and of Arab resentment, the PLO was above all a casualty of its own inner failings. From the outset, it pursued a politics of maximalism, a politics it refused to abandon even when cornered in West Beirut.* The famous "card"—recognition of the legitimacy of Israel—that Arafat presumably could never play in preceding years, since to play it (he and his apologists argued) would have left him without any further cards, was never played at all. This, despite the strong possibility that had it been played at any time prior to the war, it would have placed the Israeli government in a position of having to respond. The well-known fear of successive Israeli governments that this card might one day be played is testimony enough to its strength. Even had it been played, openly and clearly, from a cellar in West Beirut, it would have had a considerable impact, though by this time it was very late.

The reason given for not playing it even then was the *reductio ad absurdum* of a position that

* In an essay appearing in these pages almost eight years ago, Bernard Lewis wrote: "The PLO is a comparatively new force in Middle Eastern politics, but it represents an older one. Basically, it is a continuation of the Arab Higher Committee which . . . directed the destinies of the Arab population of Palestine through most of the Mandatory period, and finally led them to disaster. Their most consistent and characteristic feature was their maximalism—their unwillingness to compromise at any point. . . . [Every] attempt at a compromise proposed by the Mandatory power was rejected—in every case with results ultimately harmful to the Arab cause" ("The Palestinians and the PLO," COMMENTARY, January 1975).

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could scarcely be credited, save by the willingly credulous, even in far more favorable circumstances. When, to pursue the game metaphor, an intrinsically weak position can at least be very measurably strengthened simply by making a move whose almost certain benefits outweigh the liabilities attending it, the prudent player does not hesitate.

Not so the player intent not merely on improving his position but on winning everything, and seduced into doing so by an exaggerated estimate of the strength of his position. In playing for winner-take-all, the PLO betrayed throughout a startling disdain for the prudent strategy. To this defect, it added a seemingly congenital inability to gauge its own power with even rough approximation. The results of this inability had nearly proven fatal once before, in Jordan. But then there was a Lebanon to migrate to, whereas in Lebanon a similar alternative was foreclosed.

In the end, the PLO could only appeal to those who had taken no little part in encouraging the very traits that proved to be fatal. Ironically, though quite understandably, many PLO leaders even hoped their appeal might ultimately deliver them from the adversary. But those who had encouraged the PLO in its maximalist course—the United Nations majorities, numerous public figures in the West, even a number of Western governments—while equally as vocal as the Arab world, were equally impotent.

VI

THE FUTURE of the PLO must be distinguished from the future of the Palestinians. Although the war has in all likelihood sealed the fate of the one, it has not done so in the case of the other. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the war has brought to the surface, and in a way that can no longer be ignored, certain changes that will now condition a resolution—any resolution—of the Palestinian problem.

The most important of these changes is implicit in what has already been said. The Palestinian issue is no longer likely to be an Arab issue in the sense it once was or at least appeared to be. It is quite true that since 1967 this issue has not been one over which Arab states have been willing to make decisions of war. Even so, it remained an issue —along with the territorial issues emerging from the 1967 war—that conditioned their persistence in refusing to make peace and thereby to acknowledge the legitimacy of the state of Israel.

This position was clearly breached only with the Sadat heresy which made the return of lost Egyptian territory both the necessary and sufficient condition of peace and legitimacy. Yet it was significant that even Sadat would not admit to the full measure of his break. Although concluding a peace that once made could not readily be unmade—legitimacy, once accorded, cannot readily be revoked—he nevertheless insisted that a necessary condition of that peace was that the Palestinian issue be resolved to the satisfaction of the peacemakers as well as to the satisfaction of the Palestinians. But no amount of profession to the contrary could alter the fact, which the rest of the Arab world perceived clearly enough at the time, that Egypt in concluding a separate peace had openly and unmistakably broken the once sacred link.

There matters stood until the war in Lebanon. The question that must now arise is whether others have taken a long step toward doing what Egypt has already done. To be sure, no other Arab state has concluded peace with Israel. But by their actions—or rather their inaction—during the war in Lebanon, the Arab states have now moved a measurable distance toward the day when they may openly draw the same distinction Egypt has already drawn. For the virtual abandonment of the PLO was not merely an indication of the extent to which they had come to subordinate its interests to their own more conventional and narrowly defined interests; it was quite possibly an indication as well of the extent to which they are now prepared to subordinate the Palestinian cause in general to their respective reasons of state.

The military results of the war clearly give them a strong incentive for doing so, since these results have provided dramatic confirmation of a balance of power that is more favorable to Israel today than it has ever been. Nor can much Arab hope be placed in the prospect that this balance may be substantially altered in the years ahead. For the principal grounds that nourished this hope during the 1970's no longer do so to anywhere near the same extent today. Oil has not given the Arab world as much power as had been anticipated. Contrary to expectations that seemed quite reasonable at the time, it has not tipped the balance in favor of the Arab states against Israel. Instead, after a decade they appear further from their goal than they were before. In the meantime, the oil on which they had placed such high hopes has clearly declined in significance. Though controversy attends the extent and possible duration of the decline, it seems unlikely that the world petroleum market will ever quite return to the conditions of the 1970's.

Given these circumstances, the Arab world cannot but entertain the thought today that the moment has passed in which it might have suddenly broken out of its historic position, made a quantum jump in power, and forced a qualitative change in its relations with the West—and Israel. Oil will doubtless continue to be of great importance in effecting a transformation of this world, but it can no longer be expected to produce the magic results once expected of it. The transformation will be much slower and much harder.

In the interim, which may last for decades, the Israelis must be dealt with, if only because of their growing military power and their disposition to employ this power not only in extreme need, and on behalf of survival, but in pursuit of an expanded

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—and expanding—vision of security. Nor can the hope—or illusion—be nourished today with the same intensity of yesterday that the West can be counted on to restrain the Israelis. The decline of the energy crisis, and consequently of the power of the oil weapon, must dampen this hope markedly. And the demonstrated ability of an Israeli government over the past year and a half to conduct policy with a virtual freedom of action can only dampen hope further.

To deal with Israel, however, means to move, however haltingly and even circuitously, toward a more normal relationship with it. In a word, it means to do what Egypt has done. It is only to be anticipated that in accepting the Egyptian course, other states will follow a road that is distinctive to each. Still, the principal destination of each will be the same, and in reaching that destination each will have to break the same link and to draw the same distinction that Egypt has already done. This change, if it is to come, will not be foreshadowed by the rhetoric we may expect to hear in the wake of the war. On the contrary, in the months to come, the Arab world can be expected to be more vocal and apparently more insistent on behalf of the cause of the Palestinians than it has been for a long time. But this will be more significant as an act of psychological compensation for what was not done during the war than as a testament of serious political intent.

VII

If the Palestinian issue is to recede in importance as an issue for the Arab states, it seems only reasonable to expect that it will also recede in importance as an international issue. After all, it was largely in response to Arab desires—or, at any rate, to what were perceived as Arab desires—that Western governments increasingly turned their attention and concern to the Palestinian problem. Should these desires no longer be so insistently manifested, and should they no longer be attended by the implicit threat that carried such great persuasiveness in the past, the conviction might soon erode that the Palestinian issue is the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that there is an intimate and critical link between this issue and the safety of vital Western interests in the Gulf. For this conviction is no more self-evident today than it was in the past. Indeed, if anything, it must be considered less persuasive today than ever.

The Palestinian issue may rightly be regarded as the most intractable element of the Arab-Israeli conflict and, in this sense, its heart. But in any other sense, it has not been the most important aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict and clearly not since 1967. Nor has it been the indispensable condition for resolving other aspects of the conflict. Were that the case, the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel would be impossible to explain and the prospects of a peace treaty between Syria and Israel impossible to envisage. Believers in the centrality of the Palestinian issue can no longer deny the former; they can only dismiss the latter. Yet if suddenly Israel were to offer to give up the Golan in return for a peace treaty, is it plausible to assume that Damascus would reject the offer simply because the Palestinian issue remained unresolved?

The persuasion that the resolution of this issue is now more urgent than ever rests, in the first place, on the connection drawn between it and the security of Western interests in the Persian Gulf. Though endlessly repeated, the intimacy of the connection has never been demonstrated. What can be argued is that there is a connection of sorts between the Palestinian issue and the stability of the Gulf. But the nature of that connection is not only less than clear, it is only one among many threats to Gulf stability of which several others are of considerably greater magnitude. Yet the power of conviction is such, in politics and elsewhere, that the obsession with the Palestinian issue as critical in preserving vital Western interests in the region apparently remains unaffected by experience. The war in Lebanon is but the latest illustration of this. Although this war, if any, should have been expected to demonstrate the connection that has been insistently maintained for so long, it demonstrated instead that to the degree there is a connection at all it is, at best, quite marginal in character.

If this is so, what is the compelling Western interest in pushing for a resolution of the Palestinian problem? Surely it is not sufficient to respond that so long as this problem persists conflict will also persist. For even if this is true, it may also be true that the conflict will be of a secondary order, that it will no longer involve Israel's neighbors, let alone the states of the Gulf, and that it will not threaten the stability of the region.

The case of Egypt appears to many a decisive argument against the position taken here. And since the Egyptian government has recently been at such great pains to offer itself up as a compelling reason for the need to settle the Palestinian problem, it warrants comment.

The essence of the Egyptian case is that Israel, by its actions in Lebanon and by its intransigent position in the negotiations over Palestinian self-rule, has virtually discredited the Sadat strategy while confirming the position of those in the Arab world who have always bitterly opposed Sadat's course. The war in Lebanon, coming on top of the barren Camp David negotiations, has put the Egyptian effort, in the words of one Cairo official, "back to square one on the whole process of peace in the Middle East." Cairo has thus been made vulnerable, as never before, to the charge that Camp David brought the Egyptians little or nothing, whether from Israel or from the United States. Even worse, the war may give a new lease on life to the Muslim fundamentalists who condoned Sadat's assassination because, among other reasons, of Camp David.

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One might almost conclude from this Egyptian litany of complaints that the war was directed against the supporters of the Sadat course rather than against those who bitterly opposed it and rejoiced at the time of Sadat's assassination. By acknowledging Israel's legitimacy and normalizing relations with it, Egypt gained back the territory that had been lost in war. By refusing to acknowledge Israel's legitimacy and rejecting altogether the Camp David accords, the PLO has very likely lost everything and Syria has suffered yet another defeat. How, then, does this discredit the Sadat course?

Instead of discrediting that course, the war in Lebanon has afforded it striking vindication. The Egyptian position in the Arab world, far from being weakened, has been visibly strengthened. To be sure, Cairo has not been able to obtain its version of Palestinian autonomy. But the Sadat bet did not rest, in the first place, on the assumption that Egypt could do so. In this respect, all Sadat could have reasonably expected from his bet is that it would enable Egypt to exercise some influence on Israel and that it would do so, in part, by virtue of a closer Egyptian relationship with the United States. For the Egyptians to contend now that the bet has not paid off, and that Lebanon demonstrates this, is to pretend that in taking the new course Egypt was acting primarily in the interests of the Palestinians—and, of course, the Arab world—and only secondarily in its own more narrow interests. No doubt, this pretense is useful today for Cairo. Having gained back the Sinai, Egypt risks little by its present posture while reaping some gain. Without seriously jeopardizing its relations with Israel, marginal as they now are, it can hope to advance its position in the Arab world.

All this is quite understandable and to be expected. What is much less so is the willingness of so many to take at face value the Egyptian protestations of betrayal and the intimations of a dark future for Egypt if there is not a major shift in American policy toward Israel.

VIII

In the process of losing much of its salience and urgency as an international issue, the Palestinian problem may be expected to become increasingly an issue for the Israeli polity in a sense that it has never been in the past and with consequences that, though ultimately unpredictable, it has never had in the past. Heretofore, the Israeli polity has seen, and quite understandably so, the conflict over the Palestinian issue as one primarily between Israelis and the world beyond. For whatever their internal differences, what has divided Israelis has been much less important than what has separated them from others. By the same token, the pressure of the outside world for a basic change in the post-1967 dispensation in the West Bank and Gaza has been far greater than any pressure arising from within Israel for such change.

In the future, this situation is very likely to undergo considerable alteration. With the destruction of the PLO, the threat that united virtually all Israelis, of a PLO state in the West Bank, has disappeared. With the striking victory of Israeli arms over Syria, the prospect that the military balance might shift against Israel in the foreseeable future has been banished. And with the passivity of the Arab world in the face of these developments, the fear that was once plausibly entertained of its growing dynamism and power may be set aside.

In the period emerging from the war, then, Israel will experience a greater sense of external security than it has since 1967. The pressures on it from the outside world will be of less moment, relative to the inherent strengths of its own position, than at almost any time since the founding of the state. These are the circumstances that are bound to lead to the internalization of the Palestinian problem. What the recent American peace initiative launched by President Reagan intends is to speed up a process that the war had already made all but inevitable.

We cannot know what the consequences of this process of internalization will be. It does seem safe to predict, however, that it will prove more divisive for Israel than any issue has before in the state's brief history. For the circumstances that must lead to the internalization of the Palestinian issue are the same circumstances that must force Israel to confront this issue, and thereby to confront itself as well, in a way it has not yet done and has not been required to do.

Still, the outcome of this confrontation remains indeterminate. In the past, those sympathetic to the Israeli position on the Palestinian issue have often argued that as long as the PLO remained the only real alternative to continued Israeli control over the West Bank, no government in Jerusalem would withdraw or be permitted to withdraw. This proposition should have been unmistakably clear to the world, though it was resisted to the end by many who had little excuse for not knowing better. The question that persists today, however, is whether what has been stated as the complement of this proposition is also true, that with the PLO destroyed no Israeli government will be permitted by public opinion to stay in the West Bank and Gaza. The latter proposition assumes that what has sustained the Israeli hold on these territories has been a consensus on security, though not a consensus on anything that goes beyond security. Once the Israeli position in the West Bank and Gaza can no longer be based on considerations of security, it will lead to an internal debate that can have only one outcome. From this perspective, it does not really matter what may have been the deeper designs and aspirations of those who determined upon the war in Lebanon. What does matter are the objective circumstances in which any Israeli government can or cannot do certain things—in this case, continue to remain in the West Bank and Gaza.

Impressive though it is, the argument does not

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quite persuade. Thus far there is no way of knowing whether a now more benign security outlook will outweigh religious and historical considerations. Clearly, the political importance of the latter has grown in recent years, though how much is very difficult to tell. To these considerations must be added the force of inertia, which is always of great moment in such matters.

Finally, there is the consideration that the issue will not be posed and, indeed, cannot be posed with the clarity this view appears to assume. The security issue that attends the disposition of the West Bank may be markedly more benign in the wake of the war in Lebanon. But it has not simply disappeared. Nor is there any apparent way by which it may ever become negligible. Any conceivable change of a basic nature in the status of the West Bank is going to affect Israel's security problem. This is as true of the Allon plan (which called for Israeli withdrawal from most of the West Bank, the demilitarization of the area, and the creation of a security belt along the Jordan River and some form of Jordanian sovereignty or confederation) as it is of the many variations on that plan, including the recent Reagan proposals. It may be argued that the effect will not be considerable. What is considerable in such matters, however, depends very much on the vantage point of the beholder. To outsiders, the difference between a future war that may cost a few hundred lives and one that may cost several thousand easily appears a small matter. To a small nation highly sensitive to casualties, it is not.

IX

THE United States has no compelling interest in pushing for a settlement of the Palestinian issue. It has never had a compelling interest in doing so, and what interest it does have in this issue is of less moment today than it has been for some years. Until quite recently the Reagan administration appeared to accept this view. In contrast to the Carter administration, whose concern with the Palestinian problem was intense, the present administration had given the distinct impression that it was not unhappy to treat this problem with benign neglect. Certainly this was the impression given by former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, and it seemed to have been shared by the President.

This position has now undergone sudden and dramatic change. The Reagan peace initiative is evidently based on the conviction—a conviction that experience has not vindicated and that the war has served to place in yet greater question—that this country does have a compelling interest in pushing for a settlement to the Palestinian issue, that the need to find a satisfactory solution to this issue remains as urgent as ever, and that in finding such a solution this country must play a central role.

What is distinctive about the American peace initiative is not the substance of the plan. In coming out against both a Palestinian state and Israeli annexation of the West Bank while supporting a return of most of those territories to Jordan (presumably under conditions similar to those of the Allon plan), the Reagan proposals trace a well marked position. But the means and tactics by which these proposals are apparently meant to be advanced are new. For the Reagan plan, in contrast to what we may call the Ball option, does not hold out the prospect of imposing America's will on Israel by threats that exploit Israel's dependency on this country. Instead, it is intended to provoke and to hasten the process of internalization earlier discussed. It is designed to generate pressures from within Israel and, of course, from within the Jewish community in this country. The hope and expectation are that from these pressures, and from the divisions that must inevitably attend them, will emerge a new consensus in support of the Reagan proposals.

The appeal of the American initiative reflects the sense of frustration experienced over a conflict that seems as persistent as it is refractory to American influence and power. But dubious solutions can only serve to add to this frustration while reducing our influence and power. If there are no true, certainly no easy, solutions to the conflict that has come to seem interminable, it is because conflicts such as this one have a dialectic of their own and cannot be easily manipulated by outsiders, even powerful outsiders. The Soviet Union may now have come to appreciate this. The lesson is one that America would also do well to ponder at a time when we may be tempted to overestimate our position. Though the Israeli victory in Lebanon has now given us new opportunities, we do not hold, in the expression of the day, all the cards. We cannot engineer a settlement.

Nor is it either necessary or desirable that we attempt to do so. If the argument put forth here is even approximately correct, the greater conflict, of which the Palestinian issue forms but a part, is beginning to decline. One by one, the Arab states have opted out of the conflict. It may well be that with the Syrian defeat, Israel has run out of serious military adversaries. If so, the continuing debate within Israel itself over the final disposition of the occupied territories will now enter a critical phase.

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A New Direction for the Democrats?

Penn Kemble

FOR THE past two years, it has sometimes been hard to comprehend—beyond the label—just who and what the Democrats are, let alone where they are going. The collapse of the Carter Presidency and the loss of the Senate—a loss which proved that the party's problems went much deeper than incompetency at the White House—left the Democrats stunned, divided, and adrift, their stores of thought and inspiration largely exhausted or gone bad.

Party leaders and publicists who had raised an outcry over the Watergate burglary reacted with bewildered indifference in 1980, when Republican strategists walked off in broad daylight with a priceless inheritance of Democratic campaign themes. Promoters of supply-side economics and deregulation made off with John F. Kennedy's legacy of "getting America moving again." The rhetoric of Wilsonian idealism—"making the world safe for democracy"—was coopted by the party usually remembered for isolationism and cold-blooded *Realpolitik*. Republicans were not even embarrassed about reaching back to the scorned moral tradition of the Great Commoner and Democrat, William Jennings Bryan, who once campaigned—against the power of big business, it bears remembering—as an evangelist "fighting for our homes, our families, and our posterity."

The practical methods the Republicans promoted in 1980 for reviving economic growth, rebuilding American strength, and restoring traditional values were open to serious challenge in political debate. But the 1980 election was not about such methods: it was about goals and principles. Accordingly, the country went Republican in a landslide.

1.

AGAINST this background there was a particular significance to the party's 1982 mid-term Conference on Goals and Principles, held late last June in Philadelphia. A thousand voting delegates and several times as many journalists and observers met to adopt a detailed policy statement and, perhaps more important, to share assessments of their political predicament, listen to prospective presidential candidates, and reflect on past and future campaigns.

The national press, probably to the relief of many Democrats, found this event to be of largely ceremonial importance. The Democratic Conventions of 1968 and 1972 are hard media acts to follow: this meeting didn't even have a roll-call vote. It also turned out to be the weekend of Secretary Haig's resignation, high theater which made the out-of-power Democrats into something of a sideshow. The Democratic National Committee (DNC) staff, moreover, had prepared carefully to avoid open conflicts, and the congressional elections in prospect argued strongly for a show of unity. But despite the surface calm, there were powerful currents at work at this meeting—some still holding the party in the shoals of its recent experience, others tugging it toward safer, deeper waters.

Those who imagine that these mid-term party meetings—mandated by one of those expansive commissions in the age of party reform—are inconsequential publicity events might reflect upon the very first of them: the 1974 Charter Conference in Kansas City. It came just two years after the worst Democratic defeat in generations. Its purpose was to adopt a new charter, or constitution, for the party. The specific issues at stake then involved the degree to which the McGovern reforms of 1972 could be revised—reforms that had established the system of quota representation for women and blacks and that discouraged party leaders and elected officials from playing a significant role in choosing the presidential nominee.

These issues had brought the labor movement into the official decision-making structure of the Democratic party in a significant way for the first time—although AFL-CIO President George Meany, who always favored more informal methods of exercising labor's political influence, held back from a full organizational commitment. In the months before the Kansas City mid-term conference a bloc of labor representatives had hammered out an understanding with party chairman Robert Strauss and other middle-ground leaders: quotas would go, and other party rules would be modified

PENN KEMBLE, a founder of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, writes frequently on political affairs. His previous articles in COMMENTARY on the Democratic party include "The New Politics and the Democrats" (with Josh Muravchik, December 1972) and "The Democrats After 1968" (January 1969).

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to shift influence from small, activist groups on the Left to the representatives of broader constituencies.

Yet this agreement collapsed completely when the 1974 Charter Conference opened. Leaders of the party's Left—Bella Abzug for the women's caucus and Congressman Ronald Dellums and Assemblyman Willie Brown for the black caucus—announced they would walk out in a blaze of television lights if the delegates refused to reaffirm the quota system. A number of Democratic officeholders panicked at that threat, and other delegates followed after them in confusion. The only important resistance came from a group of labor leaders, but even labor was somewhat divided. At that time the unions had no organized caucus machinery in the party, and no considered strategy: all they could offer were some eloquent protests from the floor. "Union labor will no longer suffer sophisticated denial and discrimination in the high councils of the Democratic party," declared John Henning of the California AFL-CIO. Soon after, at Meany's direction, AFL-CIO officials resigned *en bloc* from the Democratic National Committee, leaving it to the power brokers and the only serious force which remained for them to do business with —a triumphant, well-organized Left.

This was more than a noisy spasm in the unending wrangles of inter-party politics; it had deep and lasting effects. Organized labor and its allies were cast aside in the Democratic campaign of 1976, and from the Carter administration that finally emerged out of it. An influential group of intellectuals and political activists who had long been involved in Democratic politics began drifting away in pursuit of their international concerns, which understandably grew more intense as the policies of the Carter administration unfolded. The Carter Presidency, like the party it was based upon, became an administration of the pragmatists and the Left. Somehow they together managed to reverse the tested formula for Democratic leadership: they urged austerity at home and practiced weakness abroad. That recipe failed badly.

So the mid-term Democratic conference of 1982 may—like the one that followed the debacle of 1972—have planted seeds of things to come. To be sure, this conference came before the 1982 congressional elections. Only after November, when those elections are behind us, will the pursuit of the national themes and alliances of presidential politics begin in earnest. But some clues about that process are already visible.

2.

CONFERENCE passes were waiting for delegates and observers at the properly designated windows to the Philadelphia Civic Center, each pass neatly tucked into its typewritten envelope. This spoke of the chairmanship of Charles Manatt, a California lawyer whose watchword is "professionalism." The party staff, from the young people who handed out passes up to the divisional directors, worked in a cool, smooth manner. There were no displays of dress or enthusiasm which might remind anyone of the woolly days of McGovernism. Even the jovial, wheeler-dealer style of Robert Strauss was evidently out. Democratic party workers today talk easily about multi-indexed direct-mail lists, issue networking, the demographics of media time buys. This is, unquestionably, a kind of progress. But to hear them one might think that what went wrong with the Democrats over the past decade-and-a-half had little to do with the product the organization was selling. It was simply a matter of bad merchandising.

The delegates, too, displayed a different style. The contrasts of 1972—the rotund ward bosses, the lavender T-shirts stenciled for gay power, the silver-haired notables in chalk stripes, the Afro and the dashiki—have faded. Quotas were supposed to guarantee diversity but, socially and culturally, the delegates seemed to have a lot in common—whatever their race or sex. They were mostly in their thirties and forties, neatly but casually dressed, with education and experience that put them at ease in a setting of big hotels, complex meeting arrangements, proximity to the powerful. They could have been a crowd at a weeknight concert at Washington's Wolf Trap Park—the public sector on an outing.

A report from *Congressional Quarterly* which appeared after the conference described them this way:

> . . . the young reformers of the late 1960's and the 1970's are the new regulars of the 1980's. The roster of leading party officials in some states looks like a roll call of veterans from George McGovern's 1972 presidential campaign.

Ann Lewis, the party's Political Director, takes it a bit further. "These by and large are people who came in through the movements of the 60's and 70's," she explains. "But these are the ones who stuck it out—and matured."

The first session of the conference, naturally enough, consisted of seminars on increasing the party's professionalism: polling, voter registration and targeting, the media, and, most importantly, fund-raising. The reformers of yesterday have found a new ethos: build the party organization. The Democrats once had an organization of sorts: it was called the machine. (A term that had originally achieved currency as a Republican epithet was eventually put to its most cutting use by the Democratic reform movement.) The machines won a good many elections, even though they didn't always elect the "better" sort of people. But progress required their demolition. Looking back, that was probably inevitable, one way or another. But as time passes, the particular way it happened begins to glow with ironies.

One of the organizational complaints that troubles the Democrats most is that they have comparatively little money. Incumbent Democratic

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officials do about as well as incumbent Republicans at fund-raising, for they raise most of their funds independently. But serious Republican challengers and candidates for open seats are well ahead of their Democratic counterparts. A principal reason for this is the relative weakness of the fund-raising operations of the Democratic party itself. According to preliminary figures, the total amounts raised by the Republican National Committee, the Republican Senate Campaign Committee, and the Republican House Campaign Committee will exceed the amounts raised by their Democratic counterparts by a ratio of almost eight to one, giving the Republican party organization a net advantage of over $100 million.

Some Democrats complain about this as if it were but one more reflection of the radical injustice of the American socioeconomic order. There is no denying that Republicans, being richer and closer to big business, have important fund-raising advantages. But this isn't the whole story. For instance: Republicans are better than Democrats at raising money from small contributors. Fully 57 percent of the DNC's 1980 campaign contributions came in chunks of more than $500, compared to only 16 percent of the RNC's. The average Republican contribution was only $27. These small contributors are mostly acquired through direct-mail fund-raising, which uses letters with rousing emotional appeals. But the causes of the Left no longer rouse —and those that do often provoke angers which offset their benefits. The Democrats are experimenting with new kinds of direct-mail appeals, and there are signs that they may be making some headway. But they certainly have not yet struck it rich.

3.

ALMOST everything, it seems, comes back to "goals and principles." What issues and values will the political machine that the Democrats now want to build be likely to promote? A hefty draft policy statement was given out, prepared by the DNC staff and the representatives of prospective candidates and important interest groups. It was described as a rough consensus of all the participants, and it proved to be an intriguing document indeed.

The opening page stated forthrightly:

> The Soviet military buildup is real; it is continuing beyond any reasonable justification. All levels of our military forces—strategic, theater nuclear, and conventional—must be adequate to the threat posed by those of our adversaries.

Now that statement, to be sure, is limited: it does not tell us anything about what "adequate" levels are. But it is nevertheless remarkable. You will not find anything like it in a Democratic party platform or policy resolution over the course of the last three presidential campaigns. It would surely not have appeared in any document achieved by a process of consensus. Can it be that at long last the Democratic party has joined the post-Vietnam era?

There were pages of anti-Reagan rhetoric—much of it attacking the administration for recklessly doing too much in response to the Communist threat. We must stop pursuing a military solution in El Salvador, the draft argued, and instead negotiate a political settlement that will lead to a government of "national reconstruction." We must stop thinking about how to win or survive a nuclear war, and instead seek a freeze at present levels of nuclear weaponry. The President's military programs are "spasms of spending without plan or purpose." Such charges were perhaps predictable.

But, surprisingly, the document also strenuously attacked the administration for doing *too little* to resist the Communist threat. It argued that the administration's response to the smothering of Poland was "clumsy and impotent." It denounced the AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia and it pledged the Democrats to "insure Israel's qualitative military edge over any combination of Middle East confrontation states." (The crisis in Lebanon came too late for the draft—and would be debated on the floor.) There must be a "steady, sustainable modernization of our military forces," with priority given to improving the conventional side. All this, it was candidly acknowledged, will indeed "make claims on our national resources."

The foreign-policy section closed with an affirmation of the importance of American values to the conduct of foreign policy. One sentence especially stood out:

> Our devotion to human rights, both at home and around the world, in past years has drawn like a magnet the hopes of millions of people in other lands to the United States, while placing the totalitarian regimes of the world on the defensive in the court of world opinion.

This emphasis on placing "totalitarian" regimes on the defensive—and even the word itself—was unusual. Surely the main effect of the Carter human-rights policy was not to put totalitarian regimes on the defensive—if the term is correctly used as a description of the Communist system. But President Carter was not there to disagree—gone fishing in Canada, someone explained with a grin.

The second section of the draft was as much a surprise as the first. It dealt with economic policy and was headed "A Party Committed to Growth." In recent party platforms the words "economic growth" have usually been preceded by the word "balanced"—environmentally balanced, regionally balanced, balanced between cities and suburbs, and so forth. So "balanced" did Democrats become on this issue that the rhetoric of supply-side economics was able to challenge their standing as the party of prosperity. Evidently those who wrote this paper saw a need to remedy that.

They also made it clear that Democratic growth strategies do lean heavily toward the public sector.

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One that was stressed was a proposal for large investments in "rebuilding public capital"—highways, bridges, waterways, waste-disposal systems. (Will anyone remember the large responsibility Democrats had in shifting public spending away from public works toward welfare and the social services?) Another was "investing in human capital" —vocational training and education, especially science and math. Simplification of the tax structure was advocated as a means of shifting energies from paper shuffling into production. The "Atari Democrats"—who place great faith in the future of high technology—pressed for more government subsidies and tax preferences for research and development. The women's caucus put forward a list of demands for greater protection and assistance to women in the work force. The black caucus asked for public-service jobs and programs "to upgrade youth literacy and basic learning skills." Labor wanted to assure economic growth here at home, through protection against the unfair trade practices of "new, managed economies elsewhere in the world." There were several mentions of the need to ease interest rates and credit.

While the emphasis on the public sector and many of the particulars of this program are by no means new, taken together they do represent a new direction. Ever since the mid-60's, when economic boom almost effortlessly supplied government with resources, the Democratic party has been preoccupied with providing benefits. But today, even the party's Left is finding it necessary to talk in terms of production, not merely redistribution. Even the environmentalists acknowledge the importance of growth and energy independence, trying hard to sound convincing about the possibilities of conservation and solar power, while gingerly avoiding endorsements of nuclear power, coal slurry pipelines, or offshore oil drilling.

4.

THE DEBATE over the policy paper came later: on the afternoon of the first day prospective Democratic candidates were heard: Cranston, Hollings, Glenn, Hart, and Mondale. (Kennedy had contrived to speak at the closing session.) All gave competent speeches, and Mondale especially hit a nice rhetorical stride. But they generally spoke as though the Republicans were still the party of Herbert Hoover. There was little appreciation of the ways in which Republicans have usurped Democratic themes and constituencies, and little attention paid to how that might be turned around.

Many Democrats still seem to be waiting around for the Great Reagan Crash. They are mesmerized by the conviction that Republicans are just too out of touch with American reality to govern—for long. If Herbert Hoover established that expectation, Watergate confirmed it, and perhaps in the end will be seen to have hurt the Democrats more than the Republicans. In 1980 Jimmy Carter thought so little of his Republican opponent that, as Theodore H. White recounts it, his entire campaign strategy involved little more than a series of jibes aimed at provoking Reagan into proving that he was a "dangerous muddlehead." It ended up making Reagan seem genially plausible, while Carter seemed smug and mean. So far, despite serious reverses on the economy and in the polls, Reagan has not crashed. One reason may be that his opponents have so few convincing alternatives to offer —only blistering complaints, which can easily sound like carping.

Mondale evokes warm memories of Hubert Humphrey, much as Senator Kennedy recalls his older brothers. (In 1984, will the contest for the Democratic nomination be fought by ghosts?) But in his speech, Mondale lacked the visceral appeal of Humphrey at his best. He didn't make anyone mad —but he didn't stir fighting enthusiasm, either. Many political handicappers, Right and Left, speculate that he may be bogging down in the swamps of centrism—the treacherous Muskie marshes.

Other Democratic candidates, it seemed, face a similar danger. Senator Gary Hart of Colorado, who wore dashing leather pants when he commanded the McGovern insurgency, has become a master of prudent equivocation. He argued for a beefed-up defense, but not for spending a lot of money on it. He denounced "slogans or rhetoric or easy answers," while promising "compassion—and humanity and fundamental fairness." Senator Ernest Hollings of North Carolina argued that the Democrats haven't shown the wit or discipline to convince the country they can manage economic policy. But he was stronger on scolding than on solution, and seemed to irritate. Senator Alan Cranston of California appeared to be running as a way of keeping himself in the big picture.

Senator John Glenn of Ohio closed the session by emphasizing the need to restore America's leadership in technology. Glenn has political strengths that are often underestimated: he carried Republican Ohio by a wide margin in the face of a Reagan landslide, and draws crowds of autograph seekers in the streets. One imagines him as a viable candidate in a general election: his association with the space race might help him regain ground lost to the Republicans on defense and economic growth. But his speech in Philadelphia also lacked a cutting edge. He might have stressed his differences with other Democrats: Jimmy Carter won liberal votes by promising the party an opening to the conservative, Baptist South. Glenn might have gained support—even from some on the Left—by offering to mobilize the crowds of Cape Canaveral. Instead, he was a decent fellow—and delegates drifted out of the hall.

5.

ONE OTHER significant event occurred at this session of the conference: a carefully staged rally in support of (or in memoriam

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to) the Equal Rights Amendment. The day before the conference opened, the women's groups announced they had failed to get the votes in state legislatures needed to ratify ERA. The national Democratic party was steadfast and even indulgent in its support for ERA—the 1980 convention, over the strenuous objections of President Carter and other officeholders, voted to deny party funds to any Democratic candidate who did not support ERA. That probably has already cost the Democrats at least one congressional seat, in a special election in Ohio. But the National Organization for Women (NOW) nevertheless held the Democrats equally responsible with the Republicans for ERA's defeat. NOW even called a protest demonstration for ERA outside the Philadelphia conference—in effect, a protest against the Democrats. So a score of party leaders—women prominent among them—crowded to the podium to prove themselves once again for ERA. Signs and banners marked time as the band pounded out ERA fight songs.

Yet the truth is that few Democratic leaders, to judge from private conversations, look forward to another round of the long twilight struggle for ERA. There are even signs of strain between leaders of the more militant women's organizations and women who have achieved positions of authentic leadership in Democratic politics. The latter discreetly acknowledged that NOW more than once hurt ERA with its confrontationist lobbying in state legislatures. (At Philadelphia, the ERA militants sported buttons with the slogan "Too Nice Too Long.") The more moderate feminists would like to replace the narrow equal-rights agenda with a broader program of economic and social concerns for women. Congresswoman Barbara Mikulski, always outspoken, told the Washington *Post* that this approach will appeal to women "who didn't think the equal-rights issue was their cup of tea. One of my concerns is that the right wing has stolen our issues of family, neighborhood, and crime." That is not quite the way she used to talk.

Such remarks have produced speculation about the emergence of a "second generation" of women's political leaders. This had its moment of epiphany when the cameras passed by Bella Abzug, who was denied a seat on the New York delegation this year, to pick out Geraldine Ferraro, the Queens Congresswoman who drafted major amendments on women's issues for the current policy statement. Tension between these two strains of feminism is often treated with a veritably ladylike discretion by women's leaders, but it was nonetheless palpable. Eleanor Smeal, NOW's President, issued a "hit list" of 121 Democratic legislators upon whom NOW hopes to inflict its retribution, and denounced the party (in an unliberated metaphor) for its failure to "clean house" of such miscreants. Molly Yard, another ERA militant, explained: "It's true the Democrats have ERA in their platform, but it's also true that eight unratified states are totally dominated by Democrats."

NOW's strategy for punishing ERA holdouts in the legislatures is to elect more women—to create a female "third force" in politics—rather than to make an alliance with the Democratic party. Democratic leaders—including many women—take this as a slap in the face. They remind the militants how the women's caucus at the 1980 convention—drawing upon female Carter delegates who won seats under the 50-50 quota rule—overrode the President to vote a plank endorsing federal funds for abortion, and another denying campaign funds to anti-ERA candidates. They also point out that many female state legislators—both Republicans and Democrats—refused to push for ERA. Yet NOW prefers to speak of cleaning the Democratic house, rather than tidying up its own.

Nor does it seem likely that the "second generation" of women's issues will offer the Democrats smooth sailing. Foremost among them—repeated a half-dozen times in policy drafts and amendments—was a demand that men and women receive "equal pay for work of comparable value." This is something quite different from the old trade-union program of "equal pay for equal work." Under this proposition, jobs that are usually filled by women might be evaluated by "experts" for comparison with jobs traditionally held by men. In San Jose, California, a commission has graded municipal jobs according to a point system based on KH (know-how), PS (problem-solving), AC (accountability), and WC (working conditions). San Jose's senior telephone operators, mostly women, got more points than senior water-system technicians, mostly men—but were being paid less.* Pay scales based on such socioeconomic studies might supplant those shaped by market forces and traditional collective bargaining—a feminist road to socialism, perhaps.

But some important Democratic elected officials have doubts. Mayor Richard G. Hatcher of Gary, Indiana—no neoconservative—reportedly speaks of "concern and apprehension over the San Jose situation," and Mayor Coleman Young of Detroit is blunter: "I wouldn't want to put the fiscal status of the city or the labor scales of the city up for judgment on the basis of some damn study." Still, no political party would trade the problems presented by Geraldine Ferraro for the problems presented by Bella Abzug.

6.

THE MOST serious change that has occurred in the Democratic party revealed itself on Saturday morning, when delegates were lining up for seats at the foreign-policy workshop. The front ranks of the line were filled with AFL-CIO unionists, fresh from a breakfast caucus, their arms laden with marked-up resolutions and amendments. The labor movement has at last become an organized force in the Democratic party—even on issues of foreign policy.

* For more on this see John H. Bunzel, "To Each According to Her Worth," *Public Interest*, Spring 1982.

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The AFL-CIO's decision to participate in party affairs has also finally brought about another change—there were seven or eight members of the House and Senate in this workshop alone. Last March the DNC—under pressure from labor—decided that state party officers and elected officials should be given a significant role in national party affairs. The number of such officials at the 1984 convention will be increased from 8 percent to 22 percent of the total—and most of them will be "automatic delegates," who will not have to face the risk and expense of running for their seats in presidential primaries. That is the first significant change to date in the McGovern reforms of 1972, when elected officials were figures of suspicion—if not the enemy. Now they have been acknowledged to have some legitimate claims to leadership.

This foreign-policy and defense workshop was the most lively session of the conference. Senator Kennedy's backers were hoping that it would provide a ringing endorsement of the nuclear-freeze resolution he has sponsored in the Senate. He even mailed a free copy of his book promoting the freeze to every conference delegate, and backed away from pushing his positions on the other controversial issues—such as his opposition to military aid to El Salvador—to concentrate on this one.

The freeze—like ERA—is something no one really wants to oppose. This kind of issue-campaign seems devised to keep certain leaders and movements at center stage, rather than to enact a practicable legislative objective. Anyone who criticizes such campaigns on the basis of sober practical objections can be put down for quibbling about the danger of nuclear war, opposing women's dignity, or something similarly awful. It is not the sort of debate the Democrats need in these times.

But, surprisingly, the conference delegates did add something significant to the Kennedy freeze language. The draft statement, modeled on his Senate resolution, called for a "mutual and verifiable freeze on the testing, production, and deployment" of nuclear weapons. Just after those words the AFL-CIO proposed an amendment which added the phrase "consistent with the maintenance of overall parity." The amendment implied that no freeze should be adopted which leaves the Soviet Union with a nuclear advantage now or in the future, while the original Kennedy position was freeze now, no matter where it leaves us.

Those who backed the amendment included not only traditionally pro-defense Democrats like author Ben Wattenberg, but Congressman Les Aspin of Wisconsin, a persistent critic of the Pentagon, and Congressman Albert Gore, Jr., of Tennessee, a strong advocate of arms control. The amendment passed with virtually no opposition. Kennedy supporters, believing that the complexity of the change would be lost on most people, decided in advance to avoid an awkward conflict over this. But a story in the Washington *Post* got the point, describing the amendment as "language broad enough to embrace both the nuclear-freeze resolution popularized by Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D.-Mass.) and the nuclear-reduction resolution sponsored by Senator Henry M. Jackson (D.-Wash.)."

For the rest, the foreign-policy workshop sustained the generally pro-defense and anti-Communist tone of the policy draft. Amendments were adopted which urged greater pressure on the Salvadoran government for human rights and land reform, but endorsed popular elections, not shadowy diplomatic deals, as the basis for a political settlement. A proposal "to reduce the size of the Reagan military budget" was adopted, but other proposals to designate specific figures or weapons systems to be cut were defeated. The importance of international human rights was affirmed, but without the guilt-laden emphasis on the abuses of America's friends and allies which so weakened the record of the Carter administration.

ONLY one other issue stirred the meeting, an issue with possible portent for the foreign-policy stance of the Democrats. Mark Siegel, once President Carter's liaison to the Jewish community, introduced a resolution which declared that "the situation in Lebanon presents an opportunity for the reunification and restoration of Lebanese sovereignty and independence." The resolution spoke of the Israeli attack on the PLO as a blow to international terrorism and to Soviet influence, and urged U.S. humanitarian and political assistance "to build a lasting peace for the people of Lebanon and greater security for Israel."

The absence of any criticism of Israel in this resolution had drawn some private murmurs of dissent before the meeting. But when it arrived on the floor two dovish Congressmen—one of them Toby Moffett, a Lebanese-American—rose to defend it. After a phrase was added expressing "deep regret at the loss of all life on both sides," the amendment carried with only one opposing vote.

So Israel is still special to the Democratic party, which, given some of the rhetoric of the Reagan administration, is reassuring. But there is reason to wonder how good it is for Israel to be so special, so different. How can Democrats and liberals provide leadership in defending Israel—and Israel's liberation of Lebanon from international terrorism and Soviet influence—while at the same time countenancing the sway of terrorism and Soviet influence in Indochina, in Africa, and now in Central America, our own neighborhood? Is it possible to defend a military intervention in Lebanon—a country where, even in better times, corruption and human-rights violations were not unknown—while refusing to endorse mere military assistance from the United States to the beleaguered government of El Salvador? It is, of course, possible—but there is a price to be paid. Such inconsistencies in the long run contribute to the international isolation of Israel, while feeding the suspicion here at home that the Democrats have no foreign-policy principles, but act in response to pressures from a shadowy "Jewish lobby."

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The debate now raging in the wake of Lebanon could bring further defections from the foreign-policy Left in the Democratic party, as did earlier debates about the Middle East. (One thinks of Martin Peretz, a leader of the Eugene McCarthy insurgency of 1968, who now publishes the cautiously hard-line magazine, the *New Republic,* or attorney Morris B. Abram, a leading Muskie backer in 1972, who opposed Jimmy Carter in 1980.) It is difficult, for example, to hear accounts of the brutalities of PLO rule in Lebanon without noticing some similarities to the accounts of Sandinista repression now coming out of Nicaragua. But whether such perceptions will have serious effects on internal Democratic politics remains to be seen.

7.

IN ALL, the policy statements adopted by the conference provide evidence of some healthier trends among Democrats on economic matters and on foreign policy. These trends were not, however, given much attention in news accounts from Philadelphia: both press and broadcast reports stressed the demonstration for ERA and the endorsement of the nuclear freeze, two issues which agitate the Left and cause strains in the Democratic constituency. So far, the economic and social concerns of the Democrats' long-forgotten man (and woman, as we now say) still do not make much impression through the party's public relations. That is not, in the main, the fault of the media. It is a reflection of the organizational effectiveness of the party's Left—the disarmament movement and the pro-quota caucuses—and the relative ineffectiveness of those forces which speak for more mainstream interests.

There is hope for remedying this in the AFL-CIO's recent decision to try to unify the labor movement behind a single candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination. The AFL-CIO plan, as spelled out by President Lane Kirkland, is for each member union of the Federation to cast a vote, weighted according to its membership strength, for its preferred candidate at a meeting of the AFL-CIO General Board in December of 1983. If any candidate can get two-thirds of the vote, he will win unified labor support in the Democratic primaries—support that means money and, perhaps more importantly, the backing of labor's national political machinery.

To some, this strategy looks like a riverboat gamble. What if labor picks a loser? What if labor's endorsement produces a backlash against its candidate among other Democrats—or in the general public? What if labor can't agree on anyone? If the strategy fails, won't labor's political influence be extinguished?

All these embarrassments are possible, but the Federation has permitted itself a lot of room to improvise if, on the day of decision, an endorsement looks like a bad idea. Meanwhile, fifteen months remain before labor has to make up its mind—and by getting into the process now, the AFL-CIO has placed itself at the center of Democratic dialogue for what could be a seminal period. The *Wall Street Journal* recently reported with mild astonishment that no fewer than six Democratic presidential candidates addressed a convention of sheet-metal workers in August—almost a full two years before the 1984 Democratic nominating convention. During the coming months competition for labor support may take Democratic candidates to plant gates and construction sites more often than to the snows of New Hampshire or the grange halls of Iowa. This could help considerably in balancing the influence that small, well-heeled, activist groups usually exercise on Democratic campaigns in the critical months before the primary season formally opens.

So, as a matter of short-term political tactics, the AFL-CIO's gamble does not seem to be an especially risky one. But seen from another perspective, the stakes are high indeed—for labor, for Democrats, and for the country. If the Republican "supply-side" economic strategy does not produce benefits soon, we can expect fundamental debate and political conflict over the American economy in the 1984 election. The issues at the center of that debate—many of them emergent at this year's Democratic conference—involve proposals that imply deeper public intervention in some central aspects of our economy: reindustrialization, credit and capital allocation, programs to rebuild the nation's "public capital" through job-creating public works, the protection of strategic U.S. industries from foreign competition, and the like. Even such conservatives as George Will and Kevin Phillips acknowledge the imminence of these ideas.*

Debate over these kinds of proposals could impose new strains on our political culture. Alan Baron, a Washington political analyst and sometime spokesman for the Democratic party's Left, recently told the *Wall Street Journal* that the foreign-policy and social issues which have so hindered the Left are no longer important. "It's the economy that's being debated now," he argued, "and in that environment all the other underlying differences are fading."

There is an appearance of truth to Baron's statement: at the moment, it seems as though the labor movement and many former McGovernites are moving toward some sort of accommodation. But what will be the eventual terms of that accommodation? One outcome could be the transformation of the Democratic party into something like what the British Labor party is today—an alliance among trade unions, the unilateral disarmers, and a large assortment of cranks. There are surely many in labor and the Democratic party who will

* See, for example, Phillips's *Post-Conservative America,* p. 149: ". . . if attempts to return economic decision-making to the invisible hand miscarry in the early 1980's, the failure could easily provoke renewed emphasis on economic and business-government partnership."

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resist that prospect. But, at least in the short run, they face some challenging obstacles.

The quota system is now entrenched in the party, and has produced a strange political universe all its own. The list of preferred groups has grown beyond blacks and women to encompass such hard-to-define categories as Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian/Pacifics. (The last was added in part because American Indians feared that Hawaiians might poach on their entitlements.) The original purpose of the quota system—never really one of bringing in new constituencies but one of keeping out the party's moderates—still operates with telling results. And the ideology of the quota system, which overrules democratic choice in political affairs, will surely be seen as a liability to a party proposing major economic reforms.

8.

BUT A bigger, more immediate obstacle is the candidacy of Senator Edward M. Kennedy. Kennedy gave what in effect was the closing address of the Philadelphia conference, and again demonstrated his appeal to the party's activists. No matter how it is discounted, the polls give him an impressive lead in the race for the Democratic nomination—Democrats prefer him to Mondale by 43 percent to 13 percent according to an August Gallup report. But Kennedy's strategy for the Democratic nomination appears to be exactly what it was in 1980, despite the fact that he is not running against a sitting President of his own party. He is campaigning uncompromisingly as the candidate of the Left. In his conference speech he poured scorn on those among his colleagues who have been groping for ways to rebuild the party's appeal: "We do not have to call ourselves neoliberals, or cozy up to neoconservatives." And while he ran through the standard list of Democratic economic concerns, his speech began and ended on the issues that most interest his constituency: reviving ERA and holding down defense spending.

Even some of Kennedy's supporters may see the problem his candidacy poses to the party. If he can dominate the race early, on the strength of the ideas and constituencies of the McGovern era, he will cut short what prospects there may be for some rebirth of the grand Democratic tradition. The AFL-CIO's decision to vote for an early presidential endorsement could contribute to just such an outcome.

But if concern about fundamental economic problems grows, as seems likely, Democrats may in time come under considerable pressure to increase their distance from the social and foreign-policy radicalism of the decade past. The strategic constituencies on economic issues—the blue-collar industrial and construction workers chief among them—have never been comfortable in the atmosphere of the Left. Nor is the general public likely to respond favorably to programs for structural economic changes if those advancing such proposals are associated with cultural or international currents the public takes to be hostile. And while the Reagan administration may be becoming more and more vulnerable to attacks on economic issues, there is no sign yet that its posture on foreign policy or on social issues is becoming widely unpopular.

Instead of imitating the British Labor party, the Democrats might do better to stress programs of structural economic reform while at the same time taking a harder line on foreign policy, and developing their own responses to the social and cultural mood that Reagan tapped so effectively. As our media might confusedly describe it, this would be moving "Left" on economic issues while moving "Right" on foreign-policy and cultural issues. Such a stance would be helpful to labor, whose chief concerns more and more involve structural economic problems. And it would be an asset for Democratic candidates, who cannot continue their support for the benefits of the welfare state without also proposing serious strategies for economic growth.

But in the end, neither labor nor Democratic officeholders nor both together can restore the Democratic party to sounder ground. The future of the party, for better or worse, lies in large measure with those who rose to positions of influence through the movements of the 60's and 70's—and those who are coming after them. Have they learned any lessons from their experiences? Are they willing to reject the moral and intellectual animus of the Left toward so much of what this society—and their party—has stood for? Can they pledge themselves to govern America by its own central values and traditions?

These are questions that will probably be answered in the months just ahead, even before the 1984 primary season opens. The response of the Democrats in Philadelphia to these questions—more so the delegates in their policy statement than the candidates in their speeches—gives some cause for hope. Maybe they were only dabbling in a new rhetoric. But rhetoric has proved its power in the past—the rhetoric of the Left had a power to harm. Perhaps the new Democratic rhetoric will bring some power to restore.

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The Missiles of October: Twenty Years Later

Peter W. Rodman

LIKE ALL great events, the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962 left a mark in the lessons its contemporaries drew from it. The affair was seen, with some justice, as an American triumph: a Soviet challenge rebuffed, crisis diplomacy conducted with courage and finesse. Such an event was bound to take on a mythic quality. Beyond this, the Kennedy administration felt that the crisis had an "extraordinary pedagogical importance," as the National Security Adviser, McGeorge Bundy, put it in a speech to the Harvard Club of Boston the following spring. More "intellectual" than most American administrations, the Kennedy team drew specific conclusions not only about crisis management but about military strategy and doctrine and Soviet-American relations in the thermonuclear age; naturally, it found vindication for certain of the main lines of its foreign and defense policies.

These interpretations of the Cuban missile crisis played a role in shaping subsequent decisions both of the Kennedy administration and of administrations to come. Indeed, in the intellectual aftermath of Cuba can be found the seeds of much of the history of the next twenty years.

I

THE events of the missile crisis can be briefly recapitulated.

Through the late summer and early fall of 1962, reports from Cuban refugees and other sources indicated unusual Soviet military activity in Cuba, including the construction of missile installations. When Republicans in Congress made an issue of these reports, the Kennedy administration responded that our intelligence had detected only antiaircraft missiles, which it considered "defensive," rather than "offensive" intermediate- or medium-range ballistic missiles that could threaten cities in the United States. "Were it to be otherwise," the White House warned on September 4, 1962, "the gravest issues would arise." The Soviet Union replied with a Tass statement on September 11 that the USSR had no need to deploy its nuclear weapons outside Soviet territory; it warned the United States to halt its "aggressive" threats against Cuba.

On October 14, a reconnaissance overflight by an American U-2 aircraft discovered the construction of nine new missile sites in Cuba with launching positions for 24 Soviet medium-range (1100-mile) and 12 intermediate-range (2200-mile) ballistic missiles. In addition, there were 42 Ilyushin-28 Beagle tactical bombers (600-mile range), still unassembled. The Kennedy administration correctly saw this as a blatant challenge, and an attempt to shift the global military and political balance of power.

Between October 16 and 22, the President and his key Cabinet and White House advisers deliberated in secret. They considered a range of options, including a surprise air attack to destroy the missile sites, an invasion of Cuba, a blockade, or diplomatic moves. An invasion or air strike was soon ruled out, partly for reasons of practical difficulty and partly on moral grounds: in the view of Attorney General Robert Kennedy, it would be a "Pearl Harbor in reverse." Eventually the President and his colleagues settled on a naval blockade, which they renamed a quarantine, to halt further Soviet military shipments to Cuba and to symbolize the military pressure we were prepared to use in forcing the removal of Soviet missiles.

On Monday evening, October 22, the President spoke on radio and television to break the news and announce his quarantine decision. There followed a week of public crisis, filled with diplomatic moves and countermoves and a series of public exchanges between President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. The day after the President's speech, the council of the Organization of American States gave unanimous backing to the U.S. quarantine. Our European allies, including the usually recalcitrant Charles de Gaulle, likewise gave strong support. In the UN Security Council, Ambassador Adlai Stevenson silenced doubters by displaying aerial photographs of the missile emplacements.

The Soviet Union avoided a direct challenge to the blockade; it slowed its ships en route to Cuba and sent through only civilian cargoes (which were permitted). The United States postponed boarding a Soviet ship for as long as possible, allowing some to proceed after aerial inspection. After several days of hesitations and denunciations of the "piratical" American blockade, the Soviets proposed a trade:

PETER W. RODMAN served on the staff of the National Security Council during the Nixon and Ford administrations.

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removal of Soviet missiles in Cuba in exchange for the removal of American Jupiter medium-range-ballistic-missile bases in Turkey—these were obsolete missiles which, ironically, President Kennedy had earlier ordered removed since American missile-carrying submarines were on duty. The administration refused, taking the position that to remove NATO weapons unilaterally and under duress would undermine NATO confidence in the United States.

The United States then mobilized its military power in a visible manner to convey its determination to escalate from a blockade to the use of force if necessary to remove the missiles. The First Armored Division was dispatched from Texas to the Atlantic coast; two Marine battalions were sent to reinforce Guantanamo naval base. An invasion force, numbering 100,000 men and 1,000 aircraft, was assembled in Florida. American and allied troops in Europe went on alert, as did the U.S. Strategic Air Command. These moves were disclosed through the media in a mounting campaign of psychological pressure as the week proceeded.

Finally, on Friday evening, October 26, a long and rambling personal message arrived from Khrushchev, expressing fear of a drift toward war. Khrushchev offered to remove the missiles if the United States pledged not to invade Cuba. Other Soviet contacts confirmed that the missiles would be removed under UN inspection. There was a scare the next day when a more formal Soviet communication arrived which again demanded withdrawal of U.S. missiles from Turkey, and when an American U-2 was shot down over Cuba. But the United States quickly signaled its acceptance of the Friday night message from Khrushchev, and early Sunday morning the Soviet Union announced its agreement. In the meantime, Robert Kennedy had met with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin and, in an informal "backchannel" communication, assured the Soviets that Jupiter missiles in both Turkey and Italy would be removed within a short time. The crisis was over.

American public statements were conciliatory, but for a time the United States renewed its pressure in order to obtain the withdrawal of the Ilyushin-28 bombers as well; the Soviets claimed these were a gift to the Cubans (unlike the missiles, which had always been under Soviet control). After intense negotiations, it was agreed on November 20 that the bombers would be withdrawn. President Kennedy immediately lifted the blockade.

II

The calculations and miscalculations on both sides that produced the Cuban crisis have been much studied, as has the conduct of the crisis itself. But the end game and the aftermath—the Kennedy administration's approach to resolving the crisis—have their own interest.

The administration was eager to bring the crisis rapidly to a settlement. As it did so, it explained its reasoning in many public statements in the days, weeks, and months following, pointing out lessons which it felt the crisis held for the American people in the nuclear age. Four themes were evident.

One was that the key to American success had been the self-imposed limits to our objective. Our aim was the removal of the offensive missiles from Cuba—not the removal of defensive weapons or, indeed, the removal of the Castro regime. This constituted our bargaining advantage.

A second theme, almost by analogy to the first, was that our capability for limited war—that is, our supremacy in conventional and naval forces—had more to do with the successful outcome of the crisis than our overwhelming superiority in strategic nuclear weaponry.

A third theme was that the settlement in Cuba presented an opportunity for a significant turn toward peace with the Soviet Union. This was a particular reason for giving the Soviets an honorable way out, a reason not to press for their total humiliation.

The final theme was the utility of controlled, limited escalation of force as a way of conveying American determination. By a combination of firmness and restraint, we could achieve our objectives without actual resort to overwhelming violence. This was a most important lesson for crisis management in the nuclear era.

All these themes, mutually reinforcing, helped shape decisions during the crisis and its aftermath. All had consequences in the foreign policy of the United States in the years to come.

III

At the President's first meeting with his advisers after discovery of the missiles, there were reportedly some who thought one American aim in the crisis ought to be removal of Castro. The policy that quickly prevailed, however, was to restore the status quo ante, that is, to remove the offensive weapons.

When the President spoke to the nation on October 22, he declared:

> It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

This established the Soviet Union as the antagonist in the crisis, not Cuba. The direct challenge to Moscow effectively signaled American determination. At the same time, by ignoring Cuba and its status, we put a ceiling on American objectives.

This self-limitation, the administration felt, offered a major advantage. Harlan Cleveland, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, wrote in *Foreign Affairs* the following July that "Lesson No. 1" of the Cuban missile crisis

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was: "Select your objective carefully, for *if it is limited enough* you are quite likely to achieve it" (emphasis in original). The premises of American policy were expressed eloquently in a letter sent to the New York *Times* by three sympathetic academics, Roger Fisher of the Harvard Law School, Morton H. Halperin of Harvard's Center for International Affairs, and Donald G. Brennan of the Hudson Institute. Their letter, written on October 26 and published on October 28, praised the President's approach:

> The President wisely defined the purpose of America's present effort in narrow and specific terms. On the specific issue of elimination of long-range weapons from Cuba, we have widespread political support in this hemisphere and elsewhere. On this issue limited force could succeed. . . . The United States has skillfully demonstrated its limited objective by permitting Soviet tankers to go to Cuba while seeking to prevent long-range missiles. We can conceive of circumstances in which missile bases might be destroyed by force, but talk of an all-out invasion of Cuba or of eliminating Castroism from Latin America obscures *the limits which give us an advantage.* [emphasis added]

Thus, once the Soviets promised removal of the missiles, the United States was prepared to bring the crisis rapidly to a close. On November 2, the President hastened to announce on radio and television that "the Soviet missile bases in Cuba are being dismantled, their missiles and related equipment are being crated, and the fixed installations of these sites are being destroyed." He lifted the blockade immediately when informed that the Ilyushin-28 bombers, too, would be removed. The administration apparently held the view that world opinion, which had been so supportive, was bound to turn against the United States if we kept the crisis boiling too long.

THERE is reason to believe, however, that the Soviets had a different assessment. Khrushchev, too, was eager for a rapid resolution of the crisis—fearing, apparently, that prolonged tension only perpetuated *Soviet* vulnerability. He evidenced this fear in a speech to the Supreme Soviet on December 12. Conscious that a strategic retreat is one of the riskiest of all maneuvers, Khrushchev stressed that it was "not in the interest of peace to tarry with the completion of the settlement of the crisis in the Caribbean area. . . ."

During the week of the crisis, the United States had wisely shown restraint in its implementation of the blockade and in leaving Khrushchev an alternative to desperation. After October 28, however, when the situation still remained fluid, was it really necessary for the administration to limit its new pressure to removal of the obsolescent Ilyushin-28's and thereby to forswear additional opportunities for shaping the outcome of the crisis?

For the Soviet Union, in the wake of the crisis, was going through an agonizing reappraisal of its whole Cuban policy. Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan flew to Cuba and remained there for 24 days, nineteen more days (as Theodore Draper noted) than it had taken him to clean up after the Hungarian upheaval of 1956. Mikoyan was subjected to numerous petty delays and humiliations during his Cuban stay. Communist-bloc sources indicated in early November that the Soviet Union was considering removal of all equipment and technicians from Cuba.

Cuban-Soviet ties began to be salvaged, albeit slowly, only after it became clear that the United States was not exerting further pressure. In December, a new Cuban-Soviet economic agreement was signed in Moscow, but it was not regarded as a triumph for the Cubans. In his speech on December 12, Khrushchev affirmed vaguely: "Revolutionary Cuba will not remain defenseless." Yet by February 22, 1963, Defense Minister Marshal Rodion Malinovsky was warning that an American attack on Cuba would mean a third world war; the New York *Times* saw this as "the most direct" public pledge made by Moscow to intervene in Castro's defense.

When Castro balked at UN inspection of Cuba—one of the explicit provisions of the U.S.-Soviet understanding—American officials indicated that we would henceforth settle for aerial reconnaissance. By the end of Mikoyan's lengthy visit to Cuba, the USSR, instead of accommodating Castro to the accord it had struck with the United States, had accepted Castro's original "Five Demands" against the U.S. (an end to economic sanctions, to subversive activities, to "piratical attacks" on Cuba, and to violations of Cuban air space, and an American withdrawal from Guantanamo) and had agreed to another: UN inspection of Florida!

A diplomatic opportunity for the United States to weaken the bonds between Cuba and the USSR had been presented in a proposal by the government of leftist President João Goulart of Brazil. On October 27, during the crisis, Brazil suggested a compromise based on the neutralization and denuclearization of Cuba in return for an American pledge not to invade. The result, as a Latin diplomat put it, could have been the "Finlandization" of Cuba, leaving the island in the same status vis-à-vis the U.S. as Finland is vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

The Brazilian proposal was never pursued by the United States—but that such an idea was advanced by a champion of the Left in Latin America shows the degree of revulsion in the hemisphere at Cuba's alliance with the Soviet Union. It is a sign of how isolated and vulnerable the four-year-old Castro regime was at the close of the crisis.

Such reflections are almost painful twenty years later, when Cuba remains one of the most loyal members of the Soviet bloc, has a major influence throughout Latin America, sends expeditionary forces all over Africa, is a dominant force in the global movement of nonaligned nations, and presents a perennial challenge to American interests.

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One cannot help wondering how much of this could have been avoided if, in the aftermath of the missile crisis, the American advantage had been pressed with more ingenuity and vigor.

IV

If limitation of objectives was a crucial component of the Kennedy administration policy, limitation of means was also considered a key to success in the missile crisis. Thus McGeorge Bundy told the Harvard Club of Boston the following spring:

> Those who believe in the importance and relevance of conventional weapons on the spot conclude—as I think many of us do in Washington—that what was most important here was not the strategic nuclear balance, but the immediate and effective operational impact of the conventional forces of the United States in the Caribbean.

Similarly, Under Secretary of State George W. Ball explained to a conference of NATO parliamentarians in Paris on November 16, 1962:

> Why were we able to modulate and attune our responses so closely to the degree of our need? Surely it was because we had the ability to deploy as required a very large variety of land, sea, and air forces in the fashion necessary to accomplish the task at hand. Because we had clear superiority of conventional forces, we were never confronted with the awful dilemma of having to utilize major nuclear weapons or to retreat from our objective.

And Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara told a group of NATO Ministers in early 1963:

> [P]erhaps most significantly, the forces that were the cutting edge of the action were the non-nuclear ones. Nuclear force was not irrelevant but it was in the background. Non-nuclear forces were our sword, our nuclear forces were our shield.

The Kennedy administration had come into office criticizing the "massive retaliation" policies of the Eisenhower administration—the reliance on strategic nuclear forces to deter all challenges and to save money in the defense budget. The new administration saw, correctly, that growth of the Soviet nuclear arsenal would blunt the Western threat to resort to strategic war; challenges would now be more likely to appear on the conventional level, and we needed greater flexibility to meet such challenges directly. It was in line with this perception that the United States strengthened its conventional forces in Europe during the Berlin crisis of 1961 and began trying to persuade its allies of the virtues of a strategy of "flexible response." The new strategic doctrine was resisted by those Europeans, such as de Gaulle, who saw it as a sign of a diminished American willingness to defend Europe. The administration eagerly seized on the Cuban crisis, therefore, as proof of the value of conventional forces.

De Gaulle was not convinced. To the contrary, in a news conference on January 14, 1963, he repeated his view that American nuclear weapons, "which are the most powerful of all," remained "the essential guarantee of world peace. This fact, and the determination with which President Kennedy used it, came into full light out of the Cuban affair."

In truth, at the time of the crisis the United States enjoyed unquestioned superiority in *both* categories. Our Atlantic fleet and the troops and aircraft based in the continental United States or at Guantanamo gave us an overwhelming capability for any mission: enforcing the blockade, striking against the missile bases, or invading the island. At the same time, in strategic weapons the U.S. enjoyed a superiority over the USSR of more than five-to-one in ICBM launchers and more than eight-to-one in intercontinental bombers.

This luxury of superiority in both the strategic and conventional dimensions meant that the United States could not possibly have failed: it was fruitless for the Soviets to persist in the face of such crushing odds. But it was also fruitless then and it remains fruitless today to debate which of the two elements of power was the more decisive. Theoretically, the side facing defeat at the conventional level should have the option of escalating to the strategic level; since the Soviets faced annihilation at the higher level as well, their backing down was a foregone conclusion. There is no doubt that local superiority was an enormous advantage, and that it remains so in an age of nuclear parity. But dogmatic claims that conventional superiority was sufficient do not seem supportable.

Eventually, the administration eased its advocacy and settled on the reasonable notion that both elements were important. Thus McGeorge Bundy in a *Foreign Affairs* article of April 1964 came to the view that "all kinds of military strength were relevant" in the crisis. But the intellectual predisposition to downplay the importance of strategic forces may have had its effect. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations expected the Soviet Union to resign itself to strategic inferiority, as if the strategic arms race were over. Secretary McNamara told *U.S. News & World Report* (April 12, 1965) that the Soviet leaders

> have decided that they have lost the quantitative race, and they are not seeking to engage us in that contest. . . . There is no indication that the Soviets are seeking to develop a strategic nuclear force as large as ours.

This, of course, was a terrible misjudgment. It cannot be proved whether, or to what extent, the missile crisis played a role here. Suffice it to say that the Soviet interpretation of Cuba was not the same as the one fashionable in Washington. Khrushchev's assessment of the significance of nuclear weapons was made vivid in his speech of December 12,

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in answer to those who attacked him for backing down in the crisis:

> If [imperialism] is now a "paper tiger," those who say this know that this "paper tiger" has atomic teeth. It can use them and it must not be treated lightly.

In the second volume of his memoirs, Khrushchev reiterated that for him, Cuba highlighted the importance of building long-range nuclear missiles. Indeed, the deployment of medium-range missiles in Cuba had almost certainly been undertaken in the first place precisely to make up for the humiliating imbalance in ICBM's.

Khrushchev and his successors, in any event, did not trouble themselves over the intellectual problem of which forces had been the more important in Cuba. They began a massive program of rearmament in *all* categories of military power.

V

This leads us to the question of whether the settlement in Cuba brought about a turn toward peace with the Soviet Union. The missile crisis had hardly passed its climax when theories began to appear seeking to explain the various twists and turns of Soviet policy in the preceding week. The press was filled with speculations—no doubt stimulated by similar speculations within the U.S. government—about an "internal crisis" in the Kremlin. "Khrushchev must have been under very heavy pressure, to take the risk he took" in placing missiles in Cuba, a presidential aide told the journalists Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett. "He is still under that pressure, and it may become heavier." Indeed, the administration decided to keep secret Khrushchev's conciliatory letter of October 26, to spare him embarrassment.

In a televised interview on December 17, 1962, President Kennedy expressed the opinion that Premier Khrushchev "realizes how dangerous a world we live in," and therefore that the U.S. was "better off with the Khrushchev view" than with the more militant policy represented by Communist China. The theory seemed to be that we should protect Khrushchev from his dangerous rivals by refraining from humiliating him further. Thus, James Reston reported in the New York *Times* on October 29 that the President viewed the crisis settlement "not as a great victory, but merely as an honorable accommodation." Max Frankel reported in the *Times* on November 1: "The inclination here is toward moderation."

The inclination, in fact, was to use the crisis as an opportunity to seek a settlement on broad issues. McGeorge Bundy wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in April 1964: "It was and is the central meaning of this affair [the Cuban crisis] that a major threat to peace and freedom was removed by means which strengthened the prospects of both."

The exchange of letters between Khrushchev and the President on October 28 revealed a mutual interest in pursuing arms-control measures. The President stated publicly on receipt of Khrushchev's letter:

> It is my earnest hope that the governments of the world can, with a solution of the Cuban crisis, turn their urgent attention to the compelling necessity for ending the arms race and reducing world tensions.

Khrushchev returned to the question of a nuclear test ban, in particular, in a letter of December 19. The President replied on December 28 that he was "very glad" to hear Soviet views, and asserted: "Perhaps only those who have the responsibility for controlling these weapons fully realize the awful devastation their use would bring."

This sense of almost personal rapport contributed as well to the conviction that American objectives in the crisis should remain limited. The President's reply of December 28, while it emphasized the American concern for verification of a test-ban treaty through on-site inspection of the U.S. and USSR, made no mention of the promised on-site inspection of Cuba to verify removal of the missiles.

The theory of "moderates" under pressure from "hard-liners" in the Kremlin is a hardy perennial. Unfortunately, however, there is no evidence that Khrushchev was pressured into the Cuban adventure by the Chinese or by hard-line military men. Idle speculation in this regard provoked even so sympathetic an observer as Max Frankel into writing a caustic article (the *Reporter*, November 22, 1962) mocking the tendency he saw among American policy-makers to sympathize with Khrushchev's plight:

> Even if it were wise to "help" him in his hour of distress—out of fear that any other Soviet leader would be worse—how could we? By playing down our victory in the Cuba showdown until he is persuaded that he had ventured and lost nothing with his stealthy and reckless maneuver? Or by dismantling some Western bases and devising other "compromises" that would allow him to argue that his Caribbean caper had been productive?

According to Frankel, Washington was "almost immobilized by its success, by the gnawing guilt that it may have seriously injured the very forces that have always advocated doing us in gently and politely."

The aftermath of the missile crisis indeed saw an unprecedented series of steps toward East-West cooperation: the installation of a Moscow-Washington "hot line" for emergency communications; a U.S.-Soviet accord renouncing the use of outer space for military purposes; a limited nuclear test-ban treaty; and a sale of American grain to the Soviet Union. President Kennedy's adviser, Theodore Sorensen, was not the only one to conclude from all this activity that there had indeed been, as he wrote in his memoirs, a "reshuffle" of Soviet priorities, a

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decision by Khrushchev to "forgo trying to win the arms race" and to "remov[e] conflict with the West from the top of his agenda." The dominant trend in the West was to assume that the missile crisis had ushered in a period of Soviet restraint and conciliation. The Soviets, particularly in contrast with the obstreperous Chinese, now seemed like people with whom one could do business.

Once again, however, the Soviet interpretation of Cuba seems to have been far different. It is summed up in the famous remark of First Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily Kuznetsov to John McCloy during their negotiations over removal of the Ilyushin-28's from Cuba: "You Americans will never be able to do this to us again!" As we have already seen, the Soviet Union thereupon began a systematic and long-term expansion of its military power in all categories—strategic and theater weapons, nuclear and conventional, air and naval. Whereas in the mid-1960's the United States, confident that the Soviets would not challenge our superiority, decided to halt missile construction at a fixed number, the Soviets built and built until they reached numerical parity in strategic forces about 1970—and then continued to build.

The Cuban crisis thus indeed turns out to have been a historic turning point in U.S.-Soviet relations, but not for the reasons some Americans assumed.

VI

FINALLY there was another lesson drawn by the Kennedy administration about crisis management and the diplomatic uses of power. The gradual escalation of American military pressures during the week of the crisis—verbal warnings backed by menacing and well-publicized troop deployments around the Caribbean—seemed an attractive example of how, in the nuclear age, one could apply power without actually having to use it. It vindicated the sophisticated reasoning of academic strategists and bargaining theorists like Thomas C. Schelling of Harvard, who had written in *The Strategy of Conflict* (1960) that strategy, properly conceived, was "not concerned with the efficient *application* of force but with the *exploitation of potential force.*" Thus in the nuclear age a strategy of deterrence was "a theory of the skillful *non-use* of military forces" (emphasis in original).

George Ball saw as one lesson of Cuba "the wisdom—indeed the necessity—of the measured response." Instead of launching an immediate air strike, the President had seen the efficacy of gradually escalating pressures which gave flexibility to American policy. The President, as Ball put it in his address to the NATO parliamentarians (November 16, 1962),

> chose . . . a more limited response—a quarantine. . . . Through that choice we could avoid resort to an immediate use of force that might have led the United States and the Soviet Union, and with them their allies, up an ascending scale of violence.
>
> That choice enabled the President to gain time—time to consult with our allies about the future steps we should take, time also to seek a political solution.
>
> Lastly, it enabled him to keep—and he still keeps—an option for further pressure if the situation should require it.

Similarly, Secretary McNamara told the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 20, 1963, that the "power of escalation" had been an important component of the "controlled response" which signaled to the Soviet Union our determination to achieve our objective in the Cuban crisis. Harlan Cleveland, in his *Foreign Affairs* article on crisis diplomacy in July 1963, cited Cuba as an example of the maxim: "Creep Up Carefully on the Use of Force." The benefit of controlled escalation was that it conveyed the "latent threat of more force" even while exercising restraint. In terms reminiscent of Schelling's bargaining theory, Cleveland explained:

> The use of force in a dangerous world demands adherence to a doctrine of restraint—the cool, calm, and collected manipulation of power for collective security—and the sophisticated mixture of diplomacy with that power. For until the ultimate thermonuclear button is pressed . . . force is just another manner of speaking—with a rather expensive vocabulary. But if force is to be a persuasive form of discourse, its modulations must carry not only the latent threat of more force but equally the assurance that it is under the personal control of responsible men.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in his memoir *A Thousand Days*, praised the President's "combination of toughness and restraint, . . . so brilliantly controlled, so matchlessly calibrated, that dazzled the world."

OF ALL the interpretations of Cuba so far noted, this had perhaps the most interesting later history. It played a role in our unfolding involvement in Vietnam.

David Halberstam in *The Best and the Brightest* writes that the analogy of the Cuban missile crisis—the "slow, judicious" use of power "signaling clearly and cautiously their intentions"—was vivid in the minds of Secretary of Defense McNamara and others in early 1965 as they developed the plan of gradually escalated bombing that marked our first direct military involvement in Indochina. Thus also Bill Moyers, in an interview published in the *Atlantic* in July 1968:

> [T]here was an unspoken assumption in Washington that a major war was something that could be avoided if we injected just a little power at a time. There was an assumption that the people in Hanoi would interpret the beginning of the bombing and the announcement of a major buildup as signals of resolve on our part which implied greater resistance to come if they did not change their plans. . . . There was a confidence—it was never bragged about, it was

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just there—a residue, perhaps, of the confrontation over the missiles in Cuba—that when the chips were really down, the other people would fold.

The Pentagon Papers bear this out. A memorandum from Walt W. Rostow, then head of the State Department planning staff, to Secretary of State Dean Rusk on November 23, 1964, spoke of the need to convey some "decisive signal" to the North Vietnamese that we were prepared to prevent their conquest of Indochina. Rostow recommended an initial introduction of U.S. ground forces and retaliation against North Vietnam coupled with the same kind of "determination and staying power" that we had shown in Cuba.

Even where Cuba is not mentioned, the same conceptual apparatus recurs with unmistakable frequency in the Pentagon Papers. Thus McGeorge Bundy, en route home after a visit to Saigon, wrote a lengthy memorandum to President Johnson on February 7, 1965, recommending a bombing strategy of "graduated and continuing reprisal" in which the "level of force and pressure" would "begin at a low level" and "be increased only gradually." Its aim was not to "win" an air war in the North but to "influence the course of the struggle in the South." Our ambassador to South Vietnam, Maxwell Taylor, similarly favored "a measured, controlled sequence of actions" against North Vietnam for the purpose of giving Hanoi's leaders "serious doubts as to their chances for ultimate success." Admiral U.S.G. Sharp, our Pacific commander, also endorsed a "'graduated pressures' philosophy" which conveyed "steady, relentless movement toward our objective of convincing Hanoi and Peiping of the prohibitive cost to them of their program of subversion, insurgency, and aggression in Southeast Asia." President Johnson cabled to Ambassador Taylor on February 8, 1965, that he had approved a plan for "continuing action" against North Vietnam "with modifications up and down in tempo and scale in the light of your recommendations . . . and our own continuing review of the situation."

Thus began the initial bombing campaign over North Vietnam known as Rolling Thunder. One of its purposes, Admiral Sharp wrote in a summary report in 1968, was "to drive home to the North Vietnamese leaders that our staying power was superior to their own." This of course is precisely what it did *not* do. The fine-tuned, constrained, and demonstrative uses of force, which according to sophisticated rationales were to convey our willingness to commit overwhelming power, implied in fact the opposite: that we were *not* really eager or willing to engage ourselves more fully. If the hope was to *avoid* a major commitment of American troops and American power, as indeed it was, then the North Vietnamese were as capable of discerning this strategy as we were of devising it.

At the beginning of January 1967, North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong gave New York *Times* correspondent Harrison Salisbury his own assessment of the relative staying power of the two sides. The escalation of our bombing had made no decisive military difference, said the Premier. North Vietnam had adjusted to the early difficulties and was now prepared to outlast us—to fight on for ten years, twenty years, as long as needed. Pham Van Dong turned out to be right.

It was not the Cuban missile crisis that enmeshed us in Vietnam. But analogies with Cuba were one element in the thinking of those in office during both crises. More precisely, certain preconceptions which the American administration had seen vindicated in Cuba turned up again in exactly the same vocabulary when basic decisions were being made over Vietnam. Whatever historical weight one chooses to place upon it, the "Cuba connection" left its mark here, as in other dimensions of our national-security policy, with important consequences for America's global position today. Altogether it is another intriguing testimony to the power of ideas, or perhaps to the capacity for self-delusion among those in the grip of "sophisticated" thinking about political and military realities.

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The Stalinist Follies

Eric M. Breindel

In June 1949, Paul Robeson arrived in the Soviet Union on one of his periodic pilgrimages. According to a new account by his son, Paul, Jr.,* Robeson was immediately alarmed by the political atmosphere, sensing the virulently anti-Semitic character of the state-orchestrated campaign against "Zionism," "Titoism," and "cosmopolitanism." Concerned about his many friends in the quasi-official Jewish cultural community, the "People's Artist" of American Communism sought to make contact with them. As testimony to the seriousness with which a personal request from Paul Robeson was regarded by Soviet officialdom, even in that climate of paranoia, his perseverance in the face of resistance from the authorities did eventually meet with some success. The poet Itzik Fefer—the famed Red Army Colonel Fefer of the wartime Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee—was apparently taken from his prison cell and deposited at Robeson's hotel doorstep. The two friends spent an afternoon together in a room which both men assumed had been bugged. But Fefer, using body language, communicated to Robeson a few suggestive facts about the terror already well under way: the murder of the Yiddish theater director Solomon Mikhoels the previous year, at the direct order of Stalin; the arrest of other prominent Jewish cultural figures; the massive purge of the Leningrad Communist party; and Fefer's assessment of his own likely fate (the poet drew his hand across his throat).

Yet shortly after his return to the United States in 1949, Robeson was interviewed by the monthly *Soviet Russia Today* and took the opportunity to denounce even the suggestion that there might be anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union: "I met Jewish people all over the place. . . . I heard no word about it." And in 1957, even after Khrushchev's secret speech acknowledging the crimes of the Stalin period, Robeson refused to sign a public statement concerning the fate of Fefer, the writer Peretz Markish, and their many murdered comrades. Nor would Robeson denounce the frameup of the physicians, mostly Jewish, executed after conviction on the transparently ludicrous charge of having plotted to poison Stalin.

These facts about Robeson's behavior are hardly surprising. Indeed, his son's account of the Fefer encounter makes it clear that Robeson, already then in 1949, was well aware of what had transpired in the Soviet Union during the purges of the 1930's. His was the silence of a disciplined Stalinist. As the son explains, Robeson "had promised himself he would never publicly criticize the USSR . . . he believed passionately that U.S. imperialism was the greatest enemy of progressive mankind. . . . In such a context Paul would not consider making a public criticism of anti-Semitism in the USSR."

If there is little new insight into Paul Robeson in this grotesque tale, it is of interest simply to consider that his son should now choose to tell it. For in 1976, when the scholar Herbert Marshall published a similar account of the Robeson-Fefer episode in the *Bulletin of the Center for Soviet and East European Studies*, a vituperative letter to the journal from Paul Robeson, Jr. termed Marshall's description of the events in question "wholly false . . . pure fiction." The younger Robeson now concedes that "he certainly did cover up the story" six years ago. It seems that in 1976 he still felt bound by a promise to his father never to reveal these facts during the latter's lifetime. Today he regards himself as liberated from this vow. But since his father was already dead in 1976, it does not seem inappropriate to seek an alternative explanation.

Most likely, the younger Robeson has at last begun to distance himself from party dogma. Needless to say, his remarks provoked a bitter response from former comrades still in the bosom of the American Communist movement. Writing in the CP's *Daily World*, Lloyd L. Brown, once Robeson's "designated biographer," delivered a scathing attack on the younger Robeson for perpetrating a "grotesque falsehood." But for Paul Robeson, Jr. the absolute discipline of the true believer is a thing of the past. Thus it has become possible for him actually to criticize the Soviet Union—for misdeeds past and even present. To be sure, this criticism takes a highly restrained form. In Paul Robeson, Jr.'s presentation, the enduring fact of state-sanctioned anti-Semitism in the USSR, while identified and condemned, is treated as an aberration rather than as a natural by-product of Soviet-style totalitarianism. It remains his contention that the martyrdom of the Yiddish writers was particularly a tragedy "for all those who believe in socialism."

Still, in his willingness to be specific both about the crimes of Stalin and about contemporary "flaws" in Soviet society, Paul Robeson, Jr. is a good deal more open than certain others who today trumpet their ostensible freedom from Communist orthodoxy. In February of this year, a now famous evening was held at Town Hall at which a sector of the hard Left made a rather belated effort to express solidarity with the workers' uprising in Poland. The purpose of the meeting was to try to undermine the natural monopoly over the Poland issue, in American political and intellectual life, enjoyed by avowed anti-Communists—

Eric M. Breindel, *who contributed "The Communists & the Committees" to our January 1981 issue, is a recent graduate of the Harvard Law School.*

* "How My Father Last Met Itzik Fefer," *Jewish Currents*, November 1981.

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in short, to restore a measure of credibility to the Left, even at the price of overt criticism of the USSR and its puppet regime in Warsaw. But Susan Sontag, speaking at the meeting, provoked controversy by going too far for her audience, denouncing her fellow leftists for ignoring or excusing the crimes of Communism over the last three decades and more, and positing the thesis that "Communism is successful fascism . . . fascism with a human face." In his rebuttal to Miss Sontag in the *Village Voice*, Alexander Cockburn commented:

> The audience and the platform were filled with people who had, for longer than three decades, excoriated the depredations of Stalin as socialists and anti-capitalist radicals. On the platform with Sontag were Paul Robeson, Jr. and Pete Seeger, both well associated in the public mind with that very movement which she decried as "successful fascism," who could scarcely, given their attendance and commitment to a movement to defend Polish workers, be accused of absolute, ongoing intellectual myopia.

To translate this elaborate construction into simple English, the very presence at Town Hall of former Communists supposedly belies Miss Sontag's charge that many on the American Left still refuse to recognize the truth about the Soviet Union. Now, it is true that Seeger, the younger Robeson, and others from the same political tradition did indeed lend their support to this manifestation against the Soviet-installed junta in Poland. And the younger Robeson, as we have seen, has come forward to criticize the Soviet Union on a matter of far greater import to him personally. But Cockburn was speaking of people who had "excoriated the depredations of Stalin" for "longer than three decades," a period of time clearly inapplicable to his two examples. At most Cockburn may have had a point in the modifier "absolute," as in "absolute, ongoing intellectual myopia." No longer are Robeson, Jr., Seeger, and others like them *absolute* in their refusal to see wrongdoing in the Soviet camp. Limited concessions are the order of the day for this variety of ex-Communist.

During the period when Paul Robeson himself was part of the public face of American Communism, even a development of this sort would have seemed improbable—to Communists and non-Communists alike. There then appeared to be two principal types among ex-Communists: for want of better tags, *The God that Failed* type and the *National Review* type. The former—for example, Stephen Spender, Richard Wright, Louis Fischer, and other contributors to the historic volume, *The God that Failed*—remained highly critical of America, and especially of capitalism, and continued to identify with the Left. The latter—Whittaker Chambers and James Burnham, for example—though distressed about various aspects of American life, were strong patriots and were comfortable on the political Right.

What both groups had in common, however, was an unyielding hatred of the Soviet system and the Communist movement. Both varieties of ex-Communist would likely have recognized an essential validity in this 1961 assessment by Frank S. Meyer, a *National Review* editor and former party member:

> If ever a trained and developed cadre Communist allows himself fully and deeply to acknowledge any reality independent of the Communist cosmos—a fact, an idea, an aspect of an order of being—the whole tense, complex structure is in imminent danger of shattering into bits.

Meyer could not envisage former comrades who had struggled to adapt to every twist and turn in the party line expending a similar intellectual energy to prove merely that their analysis had been "generally correct." Admittedly, there were always isolated exceptions—individuals unable to continue to conform to party discipline but still entranced by their glimpse into the future. By and large, however, those who had broken publicly with the Communist party assumed a vehemently anti-Soviet mode. As they defected, their universe did indeed collapse like a house of cards. It may have been easy to move from the status of fellow-traveler to that of true believer; to reverse this process had proved nearly impossible, at least among those who broke with American Communism during the purge trials or in the wake of the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939. Thus for Meyer and others, it was unimaginable that an entire generation of American Communists could leave the party, begin to criticize the Soviet Union, yet continue to identify, in a general way, with the movement of which they had been a part.

YET this is precisely what has now happened, and it is documented in the recent memoirs and public statements of this entire group of former Communists. Paul Robeson, Jr. is a somewhat atypical example of the type because of the sharpness with which he criticizes the Soviet Union. More characteristic is Jessica Mitford, who published an account of her years in the party in 1977 (*A Fine Old Conflict*), and who has recently offered her own comments on the Susan Sontag affair. Provoked by Miss Sontag's equation of Communism with fascism, Miss Mitford tries to attack the issue head-on:

> What of the Hungarian freedom fighters of 1956? They seem to have been a very mixed bag: many doubtless inspired by the same drive for a democratic form of socialism as in Solidarity—and others, virulent anti-socialists, collaborators with the CIA, seeking the opportunity to restore Hungary to its prewar fascist rulers.
>
> A personal observation: at the time of the Hungarian uprising, the reaction of my husband's Jewish relatives was instructive. They were among the very few Hungarian Jews who escaped the Holocaust; they were bourgeois to the core, by no means sympathetic to the Communist regime. Yet they welcomed the Russian tanks as a form of deliverance—fearing above all a return to the Horthy regime of white terror, a renewal of the bitterly remembered pogroms. Did they know something that Susan Sontage doesn't know, about fascism and Communism?*

As for the Soviet Union itself, in *A Fine Old Conflict* Miss Mitford insists that when Khrushchev "unfolded in all their grisly detail the horrendous crimes of Stalin," she

* "Susan Sontag's God that Failed," *Soho News*, March 2, 1982.

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was less anguished than many others, having "never been as thoroughly convinced as most comrades of Soviet infallibility." Infallibility, perhaps not. Yet nowhere in her book is the Soviet Union or Soviet policy even chided. Mostly she devotes herself to excoriating racism and political repression in the United States.

If Miss Mitford is more reticent about attacking Moscow than Paul Robeson, Jr., others are more inhibited still. Pete Seeger (Alexander Cockburn's second counter-example to Susan Sontag) has published an as-told-to autobiography, *How Can I Keep from Singing: Pete Seeger* (with David King Dunnaway).* The book jacket is enticing: "Here, for the first time, [is] an inside history of . . . Seeger's involvement with the Communist party." But all the reader learns after plowing through this almost 400-page narrative is that Seeger never really "broke" with the party. It seems that the folksinger dropped his membership during the blacklist period, "more from an instinct of self-preservation than any political difference." In fact, Seeger, true to the spirit of his mentor Paul Robeson, has over the years abstained virtually entirely from public criticism of the Soviet Union (and the American CP). Attending the Town Hall rally thus appears to have been a new departure for him.

In this memoir, published only last year, Seeger is as silent about the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia as he was at the time, as silent about Hungary as he was in 1956. What Seeger has long been vocal about are perceived American misdeeds, around the world and here at home. During the brief period of the Hitler-Stalin pact, while he was still very much a party man, he and his fellow Almanac Singers toured the United States as part of the CP's American Peace Mobilization and denounced President Roosevelt as a warmonger:

> Oh, Franklin Roosevelt told the people how he felt.
> We damn near believed what he said.
> He said, "I hate war and so does Eleanor,
> But we won't be safe 'till everybody's dead."

In the summer of 1940, it appears, Seeger was alarmed about the "fat defense contracts given Ford and other companies" and about the war fever he sensed as he traveled across the land: "An unpleasant irrational violence moved throughout the country." Needless to say, these concerns disappeared quickly the following summer when Germany attacked the Soviet Union.

Seeger does find it necessary to acknowledge that reports of Stalin's crimes reached him, although they "fell on deaf ears." But even now, the worst he will say about the Stalin era is that it involved "an awful lot of rough stuff." This critique at least improves upon Lillian Hellman's reference in *Scoundrel Time* to the "sins of Stalin Communism . . . that for a long time I mistakenly denied," and is, in fact, a model of how a still sympathetic former comrade deals with difficult historical moments.

Even more than Jessica Mitford, Seeger refuses to confront the reality of the Soviet Union. His sole recorded objection to Soviet society —which he has seen at first-hand a number of times while on tour— turns on "a few polluted lakes and the Siberian weather." His collaborator, David King Dunnaway, concludes delicately that "Pete has always had a blind spot to the excesses of socialism in the making."

A number of characters afflicted with the same blind spot appear in Vivian Gornick's *The Romance of American Communism*, published in 1977. Some of these seem to be *ex*-Communists only technically. Among the more interesting is "Eric Lanzetti," Miss Gornick's pseudonym for a well-known historian and political theorist. "If you meet him today and in his presence attack the party or Stalin or the Soviet Union," Miss Gornick writes of "Lanzetti," "he flies into a passion and cries: 'Don't talk to me about the atrocities of Stalin! He only killed Russians! We kill *everyone*. Don't talk to me about Vietnam, the energy crisis, and Watergate, and then dare to tell me what is wrong with . . . the party. . . .'" "Lanzetti," like Pete Seeger, Jessica Mitford, and Paul Robeson, Jr. (and indeed like the CP itself), acknowledges the criminal aspects of Soviet history, but unlike them he does not consider this a fit subject for discussion in any public context. He would thus be unlikely to be found at events like the one at Town Hall.

Steve Nelson, a long-time member of the CP's national committee, was an apparatchik of considerably greater consequence than "Lanzetti," and the publication of his memoirs last year was a noteworthy event for students of American Communism. *Steve Nelson, American Radical*† traces Nelson's entire political career —from his days as an activist with the unemployed councils in the eastern Pennsylvania coal region during the Great Depression, through his tenure as political commissar of the Abraham Lincoln battalion in the Spanish Civil War, and back to the U.S. as a party organizer in San Francisco (where he befriended J. Robert Oppenheimer and other West Coast academicians with CP ties) and Pittsburgh, among other places. Nelson left the CP in 1957 after his "reformist" faction—which argued for a major reappraisal of party orientation in the wake of the Khrushchev revelations—failed to take over the leadership.

His book is marked by imbalance. Certain subjects are treated in rich and abundant detail, despite the passage of time: the Smith Act trials, for example. Other issues are dealt with glancingly or skipped entirely. Nelson studied at the Lenin School in Moscow and served as an international agent of the Comintern during the early 1930's, but he makes no mention of the Great Purge, in which millions perished, until he reaches Khrushchev's secret speech of 1956. In a long chapter on the Spanish Civil War, Nelson acknowledges that party functionaries, himself included, "were wrong to see in anarchist activities a Trotskyist conspiracy," but fails to note that the Communists resolved these factional disputes by methodically murdering Trotskyists and anarchists—while he himself was in Spain. He *has* heard it said that "tensions on the Left led factions to divert supplies from their political opponents, and even resulted in

* McGraw-Hill, 386 pp., $14.95.

† University of Pittsburgh Press, 475 pp., $19.95.

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murder." But his own conclusion is vague and inarticulate: "It's obvious that some irregular things occurred, but by whom I cannot say."

In view of all that has been common knowledge about the conduct of the Communists in Spain since George Orwell published *Homage to Catalonia* more than forty years ago, Nelson's professed uncertainty—he was, after all, a commissar—is absurdly disingenuous. Indeed, it borders on the macabre to read his casual reference to "Bob Merriman [the Lincoln Battalion's] chief of staff" and "Dave Doran . . . my assistant," without comment on the fate of these two volunteers. In *The Rise and Fall of American Communism*, Philip J. Jaffe, long a leading fellow-traveler and confidant of the one-time head of the party, Earl Browder, confirms (what many had hitherto suspected) that Doran and Merriman "had been shot one sunrise without trial by order of . . . André Marty, the Moscow-appointed commissar of the entire International Brigade." Jaffe also reports that "execution without trial in the International Brigade was a common practice . . . and the Lincoln Battalion was no stranger to this form of discipline."

Nelson is more forthright about other subjects. With regard to the Hungarian uprising of 1956, he explains that "Soviet intervention was based on a fear of fascism in Hungary, and I felt that the fear was justified." Nelson would have preferred a "middle course" between "intervention and fascism"; still, "this was not an issue over which to leave the party." He did eventually break, after concluding that there was no chance of "transforming and reinvigorating" the CP. Pondering events like the purge trials of the 1940's in Eastern Europe, in which many of his comrades from Spain were destroyed—"Why were executions thought necessary? Why so many 'mistakes'?"—he theorizes that the problem must have been systemic: "It wasn't just that Stalin was crazy." The system that produced Stalinism, Nelson finds himself forced at last to concede, was "essentially undemocratic." Today Steve Nelson favors the "Eurocommunist alternative"—like, as it happens, Jessica Mitford and "Eric Lanzetti."

THE former Communists considered here have far more in common with those who never made the break than with their illustrious predecessors, from Max Eastman to Ignazio Silone. This is not to say, however, that there are no substantive differences between them and the true believer. The prominent screenwriter Lester Cole, one of the famed Hollywood Ten of 1947, illustrates the difference in his new memoir, *Hollywood Red.** For Cole there is no anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, period. A friend in Moscow, "Joe Levy," explains to the visiting Cole that "Jews have it good here if only they don't worry about millions." Cole's autobiography, in which the Hitler-Stalin pact is justified retrospectively as a necessary, even visionary, diplomatic maneuver (from the standpoint of the USSR), suggests just how tortured a process it must be to remain inside the fold.

Steve Nelson, Jessica Mitford, and others like them have stopped torturing themselves. But to a greater or lesser degree, they still find it natural to see the Soviet Union as more sinned against than sinning, and on the whole as a force for justice and peace. To that extent they are still caught in the Stalinist follies of old.

* Ramparts, 450 pp., $12.95.

Fiction

Malamud in Decline

Joseph Epstein

WHEN DO we give up on a novelist? Sometimes, if it be foul enough, a single sentence will do the job. I was able, for example, to fling across the room in good conscience the novel in which the following sentence appeared on page 12: "And anyway, what can be more romantic than self-denial—your basic Dante and Beatrice trip?" This was fairly easy to do, for the writer, though long a professional, was a first novelist. He has never written a second novel, so I assume that other people, perhaps later than page 12, also sent his book sailing.

But what if the writer has acquired a reputation as a serious and highly accomplished artist, thought in some quarters to be a major novelist, a modern master even? What if, more complicated still, he has given you pleasure, insight into the working of the human heart, and other novelistic rewards in the past? What if he writes one poor book, then a second, then yet a third? At what point do you concede, however regretfully, that this writer no longer speaks to you, and walk away?

Bernard Malamud is now in his late sixties. His has been a career not without its compensations. He has won a Pulitzer Prize and two

JOSEPH EPSTEIN, *editor of the* American Scholar, *reviews fiction regularly for* COMMENTARY.

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National Book Awards, and at a time when the latter meant something. Not that Malamud's rise was anything like meteoric. He did not publish his first novel, *The Natural,* until he was thirty-eight. *The Natural* plays off all the old baseball legends against Arthurian and other myths, and does so in a way that is both charming and serious. Although it was a first novel, the book sets out most of the themes, motifs, and character types its author would work with over the next few decades. The hero of *The Natural,* Roy Hobbs, is a loner, the first in what will be a fairly heavy traffic in Malamudian hard-luckers who can usually be counted upon to fade and fall within sight of the finish line. Suffering is at the heart of this novel, its point and its purpose. As one of his lady friends tells Roy Hobbs: "We have two lives, Roy, the life we learn with and the life we live with after that." Good advice, for those who can take it, which not all Malamud heroes can.

While there was more than a dash of Ring Lardner in *The Natural,* and a touch or two of Nathanael West, the dominant style was Malamud's own, and this was most impressive. Anchored in realistic detail, it yet was able to fly off into the regions of the fantastic at the drop of a comma. By means of this style Malamud could see the comedy of his characters while retaining his—and engaging our—sympathy for them. Here, for example, is the early Malamud style, that supple instrument, describing the change in a character from *The Natural* named Pop Fisher, a baseball manager who has been a perennial loser, as his team finally begins to look like a winner:

> His hands healed and so did his heart, for even during the tensest struggle he looked a picture of contentment. And he was patient now, extraordinarily so, giving people the impression he had never been otherwise. Let a man bobble a hot one, opening the gate for a worrisome run, and he no longer jumped down his throat but wagged his head in silent sympathy. And sometimes he patted the offender on the surprised back. Formerly his strident yell was everywhere, on the field, in the dugout, clubhouse, players' duffel bags, also in their dreams, but now you never heard it because he no longer raised his voice, not even to Dizzy's cat when it wet on his shoes.

There are no Jews in *The Natural;* or at least no Jews to whom being a Jew has any importance. The point is worth making because being a Jew, its responsibilities and the consequences of not living up to those responsibilities, became central to Malamud's work over the next decade or so.

During this same time—roughly 1953 through 1965—writing by American Jews took on a special interest. Extraordinary works about Jews, with Jewish scenes and settings, had appeared before: Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep* (1934), Meyer Levin's *The Old Bunch* (1936). Books by and about Jews had also been thumping bestsellers: Herman Wouk's *Marjorie Morningstar* (1955), Myron S. Kaufmann's *Remember Me to God* (1957), Jerome Weidman's *I Can Get It For You Wholesale* (1937). But suddenly, toward the middle 1950's, writing by Jews living in America came to seem serious and absolutely central. Looking back upon it, the watershed moment may have been the publication in 1953 of Saul Bellow's translation from the Yiddish of I.B. Singer's story "Gimpel the Fool" in *Partisan Review.* Or it may have been connected with the rise of Bellow's own career, marked by the supercharged prose of *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953). Around this time, too, Philip Roth, in his middle-twenties, began producing the remarkable stories later collected in *Goodbye, Columbus.* After "Gimpel," I.B. Singer's work, once largely restricted to Yiddish editions, began increasingly to appear in English translation, with Singer eventually becoming a regular contributor of fiction to the *New Yorker.* If one did not live in the United States, but knew it only through the fiction published and critically discussed in the country's serious journals, one might have concluded that America was predominantly a nation of Jews.

To THIS effulgence of American Jewish writing Bernard Malamud contributed heavily. (Saul Bellow used to tell interviewers that he was tired of always being linked with Malamud and Philip Roth, as if the three of them, Bellow, Malamud, and Roth, were the Hart, Schaffner, and Marx of contemporary American writing.) "In Bernard Malamud," the critic Ihab Hassan wrote, "we find further testimony that the urban Jewish writer, like the Southern novelist, has emerged from the tragic underground of culture as a true spokesman of mid-century America." This is a bit overheated —"tragic underground of culture"? —but it was the standard kind of criticism that American Jewish writing received, much of it from American Jewish critics. The Jew was suddenly everywhere written about as "moral exemplar," "the representative figure of the 20th century," and other happy clichés; and often these clichés were jumped up a step higher when it was announced that the Jew was also Everyman.

Yet it must also be said that if the work of any contemporary American Jewish writer encouraged such ethnic theorizing, it was Bernard Malamud's. Although writing about recognizably Jewish types, Bellow seemed more interested in general intellectual and philosophical than in Jewish questions, and Roth seemed more interested in sociological and psychological matters than in Jewish ones. But the ethical import of being a Jew was Malamud's subject.

The Assistant, Malamud's novel of 1957, is about little other than the question of what it means to be a Jew. I won't recapitulate the details of this carefully made yet exceedingly cheerless novel, except to say that it is saturated with pain and filled with the dignity of suffering. To be a true Jew, for Morris Bober, the book's exemplary character, is "to do what is right, to be honest, to be good." It is also, according to the rabbi who delivers the eulogy over the dead Bober, to suffer and endure, "but with hope." Hope is decisive for Malamud. The more interesting among his characters are those who have suffered. But their suffering, to have meaning, must not only be understood but cherished ("My past is meaningful to me," says a character in Malamud's story, "The Lady of

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the Lake," "I treasure what I suffered for") and qualified by hope for better things ahead. Such is the whole meaning of the close of *The Assistant*, whose chief non-Jewish character, Frank Alpine, converts to Judaism and submits himself to a circumcision.

The importance of suffering, the need for hope no matter how heavy the burden of suffering, the necessity of not shutting one's heart to the suffering and hopes of others—out of these cards Bernard Malamud built the splendid literary house that is *The Magic Barrel*, the book of stories that won the National Book Award for 1958. *The Magic Barrel* marked a rise in Malamud's reputation. Most people who read the book did not merely like it—they loved it. And much there is in it to love. Each story in the book shimmers with implications. Malamud seems to have found the perfect plots to give unforgettable flesh to his themes. Comedy and grief rub shoulders, as when an immigrant Jew addresses the Lord: "My dear God, sweetheart, did I deserve that this should happen to me?" Malamud's stories come out of the Yiddish tradition of storytelling, from the way they open ("Feld, a shoemaker," or "Kessler, formerly an egg candler," two of the stories begin) to the way they can ignite suddenly into fantasy (in "The Loan," the baker Lieb relates that "one day out of misery, he had wept into the dough. Thereafter his bread was such it brought customers in from everywhere"), to the way their particulars rise off the page into universal significance. And, finally, the book reveals Malamud to be a moralist, an intricate and subtle and unpredictable one—which is to say, a moralist of the most interesting kind.

A New Life, Malamud's novel of 1961, exhibited both a continuation of and a number of departures from his previous work. Among the notable departures is the fact that this novel is more firmly anchored in time and place than Malamud's earlier books. Apart from the few stories in *The Magic Barrel* set in Italy, Malamud's novels and stories had been located in some unnamed lonely America of the mind; the time at which they took place was unclear and of less than paramount interest. In *A New Life*, however, both time and place are significant: the novel is set in a third-rate university in the Northwest, in an Oregon-like state that the author calls Cascadia; and its time is the early 1950's, the period of the most heightened activities of such organizations as the House Un-American Activities Committee. *A New Life* is, in one of its aspects, a political book, though political well after the fact, the novel after all having been written in 1961.

Into this atmosphere of provinciality and political conformity, Malamud inserts one S. Levin, bearded, passionate, a trifle *meshugah*. Levin is part traditional Jewish *shlimmazel* (in the classic formulation, the *shlemiel* is the man who spills his soup, the *shlimmazel* the man on whom he spills it), part characteristically Malamudian. The Malamudian part has to do with his past. The emotion of Levin's life, he tells us, has been humiliation. Loneliness is his lot. His father was a thief; his mother insane; he himself, although now only thirty, is already an ex-drunk. "All my life I've been engaged in wanting," Levin says. The person he says it to is someone he wants, the wife of the man who will be the new chairman of the English department in which he works as an instructor, a newcomer, an outsider. This woman is also his lover; and therein hangs a tale.

But not, alas, much of a tale—or not as impressive a tale as one might have hoped for from the author of *The Magic Barrel*. Two things seem to be at stake in *A New Life*: first, the control of the English department, over which there is a struggle between the forces of conformism and reaction (represented by an interest in teaching freshman composition) and those of humanism and the higher seriousness, in which Levin, an ardent believer in the gospel of the Humanities, is enlisted; and, second, the outcome of Levin's love affair on which ride his hopes for a new life. While working these matters out, Malamud provides a good deal of landscape writing; expresses many corny political sentiments (students "must either be the best—masters of ideas and of themselves—or choose the best to lead them; in either case democracy wins"); and puts S. Levin through a number of failed erotic adventures. Bright patches there are in *A New Life;* laughs, too. Yet the novel seems, for the first time in a work by Bernard Malamud, thin. It sags in its middle. Lengthy though *A New Life* is, its substance feels light, while the stories in *The Magic Barrel*, though brief, have ballast. More, in fiction, is frequently less.

IF THERE is something a bit trivial and finally clownish about *A New Life*, no such thing can be said of *The Fixer* (1966). This novel, it will be recalled, is based on the 1913 Mendel Beiliss case. Beiliss, an obscure Russian Jew employed in a Kiev brick factory, was framed by the anti-Semitic group called the Black Hundred for allegedly killing a twelve-year-old Russian boy and using his blood in the preparation of Passover matzoh. If Beiliss were found guilty, it would mean that Christian blood was indeed used in the preparation of matzoh, and hence all consumers of matzoh would by association be guilty. Thus, in the pathetic person of Mendel Beiliss, the Russian Jewish community, indeed all Jews everywhere, stood on trial.

There is a natural gravity to this subject, and Malamud proves in every way up to it. The difficult materials of *The Fixer* are handled with great artistic tact. So serious is the subject that there isn't room for the least literary exhibitionism, and none is allowed. The phrase *tour de force* for once applies. For more than a hundred pages Malamud has his hapless hero, who is given the name Yakov Bok, alone in his cell attempting to make sense of the outrageous events of his life (and of life in general) with a mind stocked only with a few shreds of Spinoza, a fragment or two he remembers from the Torah, and years of dreary *shtetl* experience—and Malamud is able to bring this off without the least trace of *longueur*. "It is not easy to be a free-thinker in this terrible cell," says Yakov Bok, who at the novel's end—and it ends, rightly, just as the trial is about to begin—thinks, "there's no such thing as an unpolitical man, especially a Jew. You can't be one without the other, that's clear enough. You can't sit still and see yourself destroyed."

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The Fixer was not only an artistic but a critical and a commercial success. With this book, one reviewer wrote, "Malamud moves on to the stage of world literature." "A literary miracle," said *Newsweek*, with the kind of breathless idiocy that passes for praise in some literary quarters. The novel won a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award; a movie was made out of it. Malamud meanwhile was given an academic imprimatur, and soon essays about his work with such titles as "Four Versions of Pastoral," and "Comic Vision and the Theme of Identity" began to appear in the journals. If Malamud was not yet hanging around the house awaiting a call from Stockholm, he nevertheless had every reason to think himself among the major writers of our day.

MALAMUD continued to produce books of stories—*Idiots First* (1963), *Pictures of Fidelman* (1969)—but the reputation of a writer of his current stature would henceforth depend on his production of novels. (Why this should be is by no means clear, except as it can be explained through the requirements of publishing and publicity.) And the first novel that Malamud produced after *The Fixer* was *The Tenants*. The year of its publication was 1971, and its subject was, in part, race relations. In this novel two writers, Harry Lesser, a neurotically slow worker, and Willie Spearmint, an undeveloped black with only raw power, are living in a New York building awaiting the wrecker's ball. Each is trying to complete his novel.

Already, you might say, a mistake. Unless you happen to be Henry James, writing about being a writer is almost always a mistake, like poems about poems or paintings in which someone is painting. Such as it is, the drama of *The Tenants* mainly has to do with whether the two writers will complete their manuscripts. Racial feelings mix with rivalry and these are further complicated by Harry Lesser's interest in Willie Spearmint's white lady friend. Whatever the novel's symbolic intent, it is spoiled because the details seem so wrong. A woman character says of Willie Spearmint, "He belted me in the eye and left." John O'Hara used to maintain that no educated woman ever says "half-a-buck," and I believe no educated woman ever says "belted" either. More, though, than small details are off. Tonally, the novel sounds wrong. Malamud does not quite seem up to the violence of his black writer. No character in the novel is worthy of one's sympathy, so among them all one divides one's antipathies. Saddest of all, for the first time in a book by Bernard Malamud, you don't want to turn the page.

How can a really good writer write a really bad book? He can choose the wrong subject. He can—which is much the same thing—misgauge his own talent, and allow his literary ambition to exceed his literary equipment. He may become unfocused morally, the world suddenly seeming more complicated to him than once it did and hence less susceptible of being dealt with by his art. However serious he is as an artist, he may nonetheless come to take himself too seriously. In the case of Bernard Malamud, with *The Tenants* a new heaviness set in, and it was not the weight of authority.

Dubin's Lives (1977), Malamud's next novel and also his longest, is about a professional biographer, a husband and father who in his late fifties has a bout of eleventh-hour adolescence and sets out to prove the adage about there being no fool like an old fool. Which is to say, at fifty-six William Dubin falls in love with a girl of twenty-three. There is every reason to think that Bernard Malamud would not agree with this brief summary of his nearly four-hundred-page novel. My guess is that he views this novel as a profound investigation of middle age, and that he sees his biographer, William Dubin, as a quester, a man ardent not to let life slip away from him. "My God," Dubin thinks, "how long does this romantic hunger—residue of old forms, habits, daydreams—haunt the blood?" As a biographer Dubin is the author of other people's lives, and now he wants to live his own or, more precisely, make up for what he has missed in life: "Middle age, he thought, is when you pay for what you didn't have or couldn't do when you were young.".

The earlier Malamud would have made fine ironic hay of this, and spun it into interesting moral material. The late Malamud takes it straight. "With this girl I know the flowering pleasure, heathen innocence, of the natural life," biographer Dubin thinks. And: "One recovers of youth only what he can borrow from the young." Yet again: ". . . the fountain of youth is the presence of youth." Cliché of clichés, we are talking, in *Dubin's Lives*, about a bloody mid-life crisis. But the crisis is not only William Dubin's; it is also Bernard Malamud's as a novelist. Signs of this novelistic crisis are that Malamud's language has begun to fall apart—"presently" is misused, "into" (as "into an affair") crops up again and again, "experience" is used as a verb—his self-indulgent and boring descriptions of landscape go well beyond the permissible, and winters in the novel seem longer than they do in life; Malamud's writing about sex, earlier always witty, here becomes chiefly embarrassing. Worst of all, William Dubin is a selfish, charmless man, and it is far from clear that Malamud is aware of this. This is what makes reading *Dubin's Lives* such a chore. As Jane Austen puts it in *Mansfield Park*: "'The indignities of stupidity, and the disappointments of selfish passion, can excite little pity." And, one might add, less interest.

WHY DO novelists seem to feel the need always to be changing—to be, in the cant word, "growing"? Did Tolstoy feel this? Did Dickens? Is this a contemporary phenomenon? Is it chiefly an American one? No one, surely, can accuse Bernard Malamud of disobeying the dictum to change, of ignoring the urge to innovate. Now, after the straight realism of *Dubin's Lives*, he has turned, in his latest novel, *God's Grace*,* to fantasy. *God's Grace* is a book whose setting is "after the thermonuclear war between the Djanks and Druzhkies." Only one human being has survived, Calvin Cohn, a paleologist who was at the bottom of the sea when the weapons were fired. A World Flood follows the Day of Devastation—the capital letters are Malamud's—and Calvin

* Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 223 pp., $13.50.

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Cohn, along with a chimpanzee named Buz, is left to reconstitute civilization and to discover why God would permit such destruction. Ah me, as a mother in Sybille Bedford's novel *A Legacy* says to her young daughter, "There is nothing so fatal as a good vast subject."

In *God's Grace* Calvin Cohn shores up on an island where vegetation exists but no animal life (though he will later discover more chimpanzees, an ape, and some baboons). The novel's early pages have some of the pleasing excitement of Robinson Crusoe, with Cohn setting up house on the island. Then Cohn discovers that the chimpanzee Buz has been trained to talk. Soon the other chimpanzees show up, attesting to God's "cosmic absent-mindedness" and, more important, the novelist's need to keep his story going. Cohn sets out to renew life by establishing a community among the chimpanzees and the ape and himself —one that is more civilized, founded on sounder principles, than the one that has just destroyed itself, apparently with God's willingness, in a nuclear devastation.

Naturally, this plan will come to grief. Despite Calvin Cohn's lecturing the chimps on the best thought of the Bible, Freud, Kierkegaard, Ortega y Gasset, despite his holding a *seder* for them to honor God and his impregnating of the one female chimpanzee on the island, the animals revert to type—human type, that is. They become, in other words, competitive, aggressive, divisive, finally vicious. But the novel goes bad before the chimpanzees do. Once the chimpanzees are allowed to speak, *God's Grace* takes on something of the quality of a television situation comedy, with symbolism added. Much of the humor in the novel is of the kind known as faintly amusing, but then chimp humor, on the scale of wit, is roughly three full rungs down from transvestite jokes. Someone once defined charm, negatively, by saying that if you think you have it, you don't. In *God's Grace* one feels Malamud thinks he has it.

Poor Malamud, the larger he strains to become, the smaller his talent begins to appear. In *God's Grace* he sets out to understand the ways of God, which is quite a project. In his earlier fiction, when a shoemaker, a grocer, a "fixer" spoke, one felt one could hear God in the background; in this novel, where God does speak, all one can hear is the reedy voice of a novelist. *God's Grace* is meant to be Malamud's *A Guide to the Perplexed.* Maimonides, though, is better, the Maimonides who, in what might serve as a gloss on Bernard Malamud's earlier work, wrote: "But just as the human intellect is incapable of grasping God's thoughts, so too our thoughts are unable to understand the wisdom and righteousness of His dispensations and operations. But when the time comes that the Lord wishes to chastise someone, He offers him the possibility of acting contrary to the Torah in order to inflict a just punishment on him. If a man is not ready for punishment, the Lord lets him sin so that he will be ready." Of the perplexing mystery of what causes a novelist to be transformed from a central to a now almost negligible figure, Maimonides, so far as I know, does not speak.

Movies

Fassbinder & the Bloomingdale's Factor

Richard Grenier

Mike Frankovich, the veteran Hollywood producer, used to say, "Everybody's got two businesses: his own, and the movie business." By this he meant that, wherever he went in Beverly Hills, people with no connection with the film industry whatever were always telling him that he should have known that film A was going to be a blockbuster at the box office and film B a turkey, that star X wasn't worth a plugged nickel but that star Y was dynamite. These experts, of course, all went to the movies, but they also all used toothpaste and they would never have presumed to deliver themselves of rash opinions to executives of the toothpaste industry. A problem was that most of these outside experts also read a fair amount about films, without ever seeming to realize that almost all of what passes for entertainment journalism is for all practical purposes a branch of the public-relations arm of the entertainment industry itself. Most people start thinking about whether a movie is potentially successful when it has already been reviewed, and released, and there are either long lines standing waiting to buy tickets, or there are not. At this point, all seems preordained to them, predestined. *They*, at least, would have known.

It is quite hard to convince outsiders that time and again during the making of *Jaws* the production was swept by panic. *A plastic shark: who's going to believe it?* George Lucas, on the eve of the release of

Richard Grenier *is* Commentary's *regular movie critic.*

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Star Wars, gave an interview in which he hoped that, with luck, it would become a modestly successful little "kid movie" so that he could make a living doing juvenile sequels as a bread-and-butter account while devoting his main energies to more important projects. When Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* was already finished and "in the can," the executives of Columbia Pictures were very nervous, had no idea what was in store for them, and "sneaked" the film in Texas to get some kind of advance notion of what the public reaction was likely to be. It was their misfortune that *New York* magazine sent a financial reporter to Texas to catch the sneak preview. He gazed upon the screen, saw what he thought anyone could tell was going to be a failure, and said as much in his magazine. The stock of Columbia Pictures, many of whose assets and hopes were tied to *Close Encounters*, sank sickeningly on Wall Street. But the film went on to become what was then the seventh most successful movie of all time—in the hall-of-fame list in which *Star Wars* and *Jaws* still stand, respectively, one and three.

Now, on the strength of *Jaws*, you would think that Zanuck-Brown, the film's producers, had a pretty good sense of what the public wanted in a big-budget popular movie, and consequently when the team bought *The Island*, the new bestseller by Peter Benchley, author of *Jaws*, hearts were high. The film cost $22 million to produce. According to a *Variety* estimate, *The Island* earned in domestic rentals exactly 31 percent of the amount it should have brought in if it were to break even. In short, it was a fiasco. In 1979, Michael Cimino had a big win with *The Deerhunter*. Hailed as the new genius director, Cimino set out for Montana the following year to make *Heaven's Gate*. The atmosphere was festive. When the film's budget went over $30 million, passing that of *Apocalypse Now* and becoming the most expensive film in history (it was ultimately to reach $36 million), Cimino gave a big party. Until the movie was finished, he refused to show a single foot of it to the producers, who were not happy about this, but accepted, firm in the faith that they had a winner. When the film was released, the proportion of domestic rentals it actually earned to those it should have earned to break even was almost exactly 3 percent—something of a record.

But perhaps you are thinking *Jaws* and *The Deerhunter* were flashes in the pan. Perhaps *The Island* and *Heaven's Gate* didn't have big enough stars. Consider, then, the fate of Irwin Allen, the man who gave the world the "disaster movie" (*Towering Inferno, The Poseidon Adventure*). In 1980 he decided to make the disaster movie to end all disaster movies, one of the provisional titles for which was *Volcano*. Irwin Allen was prudent. He didn't take chances. The film would have a volcanic eruption, an earthquake, a tidal wave. It would take place on a beautiful Hawaii-like island in the Pacific, because people like movies that take place in nice locations. As an "insurance policy," he said, Allen signed Paul Newman, Jacqueline Bisset as the female lead, and William Holden. Even the character parts were played by actors like Ernest Borgnine, Burgess Meredith, Valentina Cortesa, Red Buttons. I visited the set of the movie when it was being shot—in Hawaii, in fact. Morale was high. Allen was sure that the picture was foolproof, that it couldn't miss. Warner Brothers, whatever it thought, forked over $22 million. When the film opened, under the title *When Time Ran Out*, its domestic rentals, compared to those it would have needed in order to reach "the break," were 5 percent.

So films over which producers have wrung their hands have made them and a number of their descendants rich for life, while others, on which the handicappers were quoting very good odds indeed, have gone, as they say quaintly in Hollywood, straight down the toilet. "There's a lot of luck in this business," I once said to a senior Hollywood executive. "A *lot*," he answered scornfully. "It's *all* luck." Another executive, whom I had just congratulated on a string of winners, answered sardonically, "Dear Mom, I am making a good living shooting craps here in Vegas." Hard as it is for Mike Frankovich's hindsight experts to credit, if they habitually saw even finished movies in a deserted screening room in Burbank with just two or three other executives, and had to put down their money—preferably a lot of money—at this point, months before the movie's release, they might rather abruptly discover that, curiously, the public's reaction to movies is harder to predict than they had thought.

Parlor experts on the movies are a strangely obdurate lot, meanwhile, far more so than Monday-morning quarterbacks—who at least know who won Sunday's game. It might be that these experts are infected by the make-believe mentality of the movies themselves, for quite often they hold grossly mistaken views on which movies are successes or failures long after the returns are already in. A new film receives good reviews and gets off to a fast start on Third Avenue in Manhattan and, for them, that's it. I have difficulty in convincing some people that Steve Martin's *The Jerk*—which got bad notices and had a halting start in New York—finished the 1980 season in the number-three position, on the heels of *Kramer vs. Kramer*. In the opposite direction, many movie buffs, remembering the initial lines and hoopla, remain stubbornly convinced that the following recent pictures—among others—were highly successful: Sidney Lumet's *Prince of the City*, the Candice Bergen-Jacqueline Bisset *Rich and Famous*, Louis Malle's *Atlantic City* with Burt Lancaster (which received some high-sounding critics' prizes), and two films from Australia, the pacifist, World War I *Gallipoli* and the romantico-feminist *My Brilliant Career*. The first four finished the year, respectively, 75th, 79th, 94th, and 104th—which is to say, way out of the money. *My Brilliant Career* finished no less than 122nd, between *Vampire Playgirls* and *The Swinging Barmaids*. All this is by way of demonstrating that perceptions of the movie business are often quite unreal, and sometimes oddly resistant to fact.

WHEN it comes to foreign films, and the cinematic interchange between the United States and foreign coun-

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tries, the misperceptions frequently approach the grotesque, which is regrettable because, in my judgment, the actual relations between the U.S. and, say, France or Germany are rich in instruction. America's foreign-language film market has historically been dominated by France, with Italy in second place. In the last few years, however, Germany has come up fast, with critics crying that the late Rainer Werner Fassbinder was the "Godard of the 70's." But just how big a thing is it to be the Godard of the 70's, or even the 80's, and just how much impact do these foreign films have on American moviegoers? At the end of every year *Variety* lists all films released in the domestic American market whose rentals came to a million dollars or more (a modest figure). In 1981, based on this list, all foreign-language films together accounted for 0.5 percent of the American domestic market, half of 1 percent.

This is not a very large figure. In France, by contrast, despite a flourishing local movie industry, foreign films accounted in the same year for over 50 percent of the market (with the lion's share going to the U.S.). In West Germany, foreign films reached 84 percent. In 1980, the last year for which I have the full German figures, American films alone accounted for 55 percent. This was not in the grand old days of American self-confidence and cultural assertiveness, you will notice, but in the 80's. The figures give an unmistakable picture of American popular culture—to this day—possessing vast international appeal. The appeal that foreign popular cultures exercise in America, on the other hand, is almost microscopic.

I do not take all this as simply a worldwide tribute to the preeminence of what used to be called the American Way of Life—although that is definitely part of the explanation. Another very large factor is that Americans, even moviegoing Americans, after over four decades of the deepest involvement in world affairs, are still not very interested in societies other than their own. To judge by their moviegoing patterns (and book-reading patterns are comparable), the bedrock American cultural insularity, or isolationism—call it what you will—is far from extinct. American moviegoers, in proportions that dwarf other societies, are absorbed in their own ways of doing things and their own country, and ill-informed, unconcerned, and incurious about others.

I should point out, furthermore, that moviegoers, compared to the audiences for television and even Broadway, are considered an elite group, disproportionately young, active, affluent, and educated. It was moviegoers who demonstrated against the war in Vietnam, and who now demonstrate for a nuclear freeze. Their quite remarkable lack of interest in other countries could, arguably, go either way politically, either toward the Mansfield Resolution and the new "global unilateralism," or, out of sheer ignorance and failure to understand the nature of Soviet society (they certainly avoid Russian films like the plague), toward a new push for appeasement. In any event, if moviegoers are an "elite" (given *Vampire Playgirls* and *The Swinging Barmaids* the term will be understood as relative), people who see foreign films regularly are clearly the tiniest elite within that elite.

CONSIDERING the small and commercially insignificant size of the American audience for foreign films, how then did they attain the towering position of prestige they now enjoy? Why, on a recent visit to my native city of Boston, was I greeted by an old friend, a highly successful lawyer, with the cry, "Fassbinder's dead!"? He'd never seen a Fassbinder film, mind you, but he had been given the impression that we were witnessing a major turning point in our cultural history, something comparable to the death of Picasso, perhaps, or Bartok.

I ascribe this in large measure to what I call the Bloomingdale's Factor. Before explaining what I mean by this, having already noted the trade's minute scale, I must make an observation about the quality and nature of foreign films imported into the United States. France, to take the most prominent example, has a large and successful film industry. It makes big, vulgar adventure movies, gross, implausible cops-and-robbers tales, broad farces, "women's" films of love and feminine nobility. Hardly any of these films are brought to the United States. Of Paris's ten top movies for 1981, only two have opened in New York: one because it had an American star (James Caan), and the other because one of its leading players had become known here through an earlier, cult film (Michel Serrault from *La Cage aux Folles*). Both new movies failed in America. The present season's most successful French films in the U.S., by way of comparison, have been a wildly pretentious, stylized art movie called *Diva*, and the latest film by François Truffaut, *The Woman Next Door*, whose commercial rankings in their own country were, respectively, 25 and 33.

So, while there is hardly a Frenchman alive who does not know Clint Eastwood, Paul Newman, and Robert Redford, France has a pop-cinema galaxy that has a huge market in Japan but that the movie houses of Manhattan's Third Avenue know not. The man reputed to be France's most successful and richest film star, who has reigned over French popular movie comedies for over two decades, an institution, is named Louis de Funès. But while the French rave about Mel Brooks, Americans don't even know who Louis de Funès is.

A result of all this is that New York's purveyors of high cinema art have chosen to import from France, Germany, Italy, or wherever a hand-picked selection of those countries' intimate, unconventional, or intellectually ambitious movies. There is certainly nothing wrong with a nothing-but-the-best policy for that American elite within the elite which enjoys foreign films. But this has given rise to the notion in a certain American class that Europe produces more subtle, sensitive, mature, intelligent, sophisticated, artistic, culturally elevated films in general (an idea which, if the American viewers were exposed to the common run of French and other European movies, would evaporate in days). And if the same American class were to approach the foreign films shown in the U.S. with the prior assumption that Europe was a culturally more elevated place to begin with, this assumption

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would most assuredly be left undisturbed.

FOR those who know neither New York nor the retail trade, I should perhaps explain that Bloomingdale's is a fashionable department store on Manhattan's East Side dedicated to the proposition—at least in its clothing departments—that foreign is better. In the floor devoted to women's luxury apparel the brand names of the great houses of European couture are lined up one after the other: Yves Saint Laurent, Valentino, Missoni, Chanel, Givenchy, Kenzo, Christian Dior, Giorgio Armani (interestingly, all French and Italian houses). Now at about the same time that Bloomingdale's was embarking upon its mission of bringing European culture to our shores, the future operator of Cinema I and Cinema II, who was embarking on a mission of his own—to show European films in New York with more pizzazz than ever before—deliberately chose the lot directly across Third Avenue from Bloomingdale's as the location for his new theaters. "When they're tired of shopping," he said, "those are the kind of people who'll come to my movies." It seems almost comically simple, but it turned out to be an extraordinarily astute judgment. It caught on. It snowballed. With the decline of the Times Square area, Third Avenue became not only the choicest place to open a foreign movie, but the choicest place to open any kind of movie: *The Exorcist, M*A*S*H, Saturday Night Fever, Stir Crazy, Kramer vs. Kramer, The Deerhunter, Reds, On Golden Pond.* The invasion of big Hollywood productions probably contributed somewhat to the confusion. I suspect that the person who sees *Piaf, The Early Years* at Cinema I, with Richard Gere's *An Officer and a Gentleman* playing next door at the Coronet, is imperfectly aware that the former is drawing only $25,000 a week while the latter, showing simultaneously at seventy-six other houses in the New York area in a "wide break," is pulling in a fast $1.6 million. The view from Third Avenue can be misleading.

I think that if Cinema I and Cinema II had been located elsewhere on the East Side I might still have detected the Bloomingdale's Factor in the American reaction to foreign movies. Nevertheless, it is a historical fact that the operator who for many years was the leading promoter of foreign films in New York deliberately and consciously sought the Bloomingdale's connection. It will be seen, in any event, that the whole phenomenon is very much in the American grain. For if the American masses over the long course have been overwhelmingly self-absorbed and isolationist, there has always been a small American "upper crust"—formerly of birth and money, now more often of education and money—convinced in their bones that Europe was a culturally superior place which America could never match. Lenny Bruce used to tell a joke that Hitler had at last been found in Greenwich Village—where he was a "big hit." It wasn't the anti-Semitism part, Bruce explained, "It was that he'd been to Europe!"

WHEN we turn from France, which has had a thriving film industry since the invention of the motion picture, to Germany, whose cinema has never really recovered from the rise of the Nazis over fifty years ago, we come upon an imbalance in trade with the United States that is truly stunning. Three facts: (1) The ten top moneymaking films in West Germany since World War II have been American, every one. (2) In 1980, as already mentioned, American movies held 55 percent of the German market—quite overwhelming the Germans' share of their own market: 9 percent. (On the U.S. market German films accounted for the smallest fraction of 1 percent.) (3) In 1981, the same year which saw massive "peace," anti-nuclear, and anti-American demonstrations in West Berlin, Bonn, and elsewhere in West Germany, nine of the leading fifteen moneymaking movies at German box offices were American, including the top four. As opposed to France, moreover, which has a weakness for American films critical of the U.S. (at present the E.L. Doctorow-Milos Forman *Ragtime* and Costa-Gavras's *Missing*), the American films popular in Germany are in the old-fashioned, overpoweringly pro-American mode. The number-one film of the year in Germany was Burt Reynolds's *Cannonball Run* (which the French did not like), and the number-two film was the latest James Bond, *For Your Eyes Only*, whose villains are Communists, Cubans, and East Germans—which must have struck rather close to home. The most evil, malevolent person in the movie is an East German. (I apologize to British readers, but from the start the James Bond films have been written and produced by Americans, and they are considered by the trade, and most of the public, as American movies.)

Although I have not visited Germany for some years, I have formed the impression, derived from a variety of sources, that there has been a marked shift away from the West, and toward neutralism, in West German opinion, particularly among the young. But it would be hard to prove this by studying the German movie business. John Vinocur, whose coverage of Germany in the New York *Times* over the last five years has in my opinion been extremely perspicacious, has remarked that in Germany (as opposed to other countries) films are treated as "comparatively low culture." That might be part of the explanation. But in Germany, as elsewhere, the moviegoing public is disproportionately young, educated, and affluent, which leads one to suspect that many of the demonstrators and moviegoers might be the same people, which in turn suggests a society in a state of quite considerable confusion.

But if there is one subject in Germany about which there has been little confusion, it is Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Until very recently the German public has quite unequivocally loathed him. An American enthusiast, writing recently in the scholarly *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, said that among Fassbinder's great assets were his "absurd or grotesque esotericism," the "sheer number of his films" (over 40 in thirteen years), and "just as importantly perhaps—his flamboyantly marketable personality: an outspoken, homosexual, leftist critic of modern capitalist society." To this personality sketch we can add,

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from the police reports at the time of his death, that he was a drug addict.

But the above writer's appraisal notwithstanding, it is not everyone who would find an outspokenly homosexual drug addict with radical, revolutionary politics to be flamboyantly marketable. And, in actual fact, until about the last three years of his life, he was hardly marketable at all, at least in his own country. Another contributor to the same issue of the *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, with more apparent knowledge of the German scene, wrote that in the Federal Republic until the mid- and even the late 70's, Fassbinder and his friends were "scorned, ridiculed, and rarely exhibited," and that Fassbinder himself was "increasingly shunned." How then did Fassbinder survive, plunking out three or four films per year from 1969 on?

In an earlier article on recent German movies,* I wrote that the film-makers of Germany's *Neue Welle* ("New Wave") represented a kind of "underground" cinema, by which I meant that the slovenliness of much of their work, combined with its counterculture flavor and (though there are exceptions) tediously anti-materialist, anti-bourgeois, anti-consumer-society themes, recalled many American noncommercial films made when the word "underground" was still in vogue. What I did not emphasize was that in the case of Germany this was a *subsidized* underground cinema. For without lavish government funding this New German Cinema would not only never have survived, it would never have been born.

THE *Bundesrepublik*'s film-subsidy system is one of the marvels of the world. Government subsidies are available to worthy German film-makers at three levels, federal, state, and municipal, and of course the supplementary subsidizers of last resort are the state-owned regional television networks. A number of the West German *länder* (states) came under Socialist control before the federal government in Bonn did, and television has been called, simply, the "patron saint" of the New German Cinema. But the Federal Film Board (*Filmforderungsanstalt*) is of an extraordinary solicitousness as well. If a new film it has sponsored cannot find a distributor, it will pay a distributor to handle the film. And if the distributor cannot find an exhibitor, it will pay the exhibitor. *Variety*, which calls this system "cradle to grave" security for film-makers, has written that a German producer "who knows how to play the complex but bountiful subsidy game can totally finance his film without personal risk," and it protested editorially against a system that takes taxpayers' money and "channels it to *auteurs* who can make a risk-free living cranking out turkeys." But the question is, which *auteurs* get to make a risk-free living cranking out turkeys, and which do not?

Now, from Fassbinder's verbal statements, which I find abundantly illustrated in his films, I think it fair to say that he was irremediably and viscerally hostile to the society in which he found himself. He was not a very coherent thinker, but his political philosophy, as clearly as I can sum it up, was Marxism tempered by anarchy. He believed in "the Revolution" and "the class struggle," but also managed to get himself attacked as a misogynist and an anti-Semite. "The really terrible thing about oppression," he said, "is that you can't show it without showing the person who's being oppressed and who also has his faults. For example, you can't talk about the German treatment of the Jewish minority without evoking the Jews' connection with money. . . ." He liked Jerry Lewis because he was "very destructive" and showed that material goods were worthless. He adored director Douglas Sirk (a glossy Hollywood hack) because he "destroyed the very life-style [the studios] wished to exemplify." Fassbinder thought that television was an "interesting medium" but that owning a color TV set was contemptible. It was observed that he took a "romantic view of terrorism." Now why should a man with such a sanguinary attitude toward his own society have been funded by public monies to make movies which the public of that society did not want?

Here all I can say is that this tells us something about the politics of people drawn to become cultural bureaucrats, dispensing taxpayers' money for the public edification. In our own country, under a Republican administration, we have seen in recent months on the Public Broadcasting Service a "documentary" on the Sandinistas that should have been paid for by the Nicaraguan Information Ministry, and a "documentary" on the Algerian-sponsored Polisario Front that should have been paid for by the Algerian Information Ministry. They were both funded by American taxpayers. Under the Carter administration we had, also on PBS, a "documentary" on the CIA whose architect and star witness was Philip Agee. So if plentiful funds were available at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, for example, I see no reason why its personnel would not gladly finance films by an American Fassbinder. And in Germany, of course, Socialist governments have been in power for thirteen years. In fact, it is perhaps only a coincidence, but Fassbinder's entire career took place, and was promoted by the state, under Socialist governments. He made his first feature film in 1969, the year Willy Brandt became Chancellor.

THE defense of the German cultural officials would obviously be that Fassbinder represented High Art and deserved protection from the philistine laws of the marketplace. Should a government refuse support to a Kafka, a Rilke, a Proust, a Joyce, just because he does not sell like Vicki Baum or Harold Robbins? The flaw here, on the evidence, is that these cultural bureaucrats would not know a Kafka if they saw one, and that what I find politically objectionable in Fassbinder they plainly like. For if you take away Fassbinder's politics and *Weltanschauung* there is not much left. Fassbinder was self-confident and enterprising (what role drugs played here I do not know), but he did not have a shred of film talent. His taking drugs or dressing like a Hell's Angel or being a homosexual would not prejudice me one way or another with respect to his movies. His politics, since they loom large in

* "Screen Memories from Germany," June 1980.

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his work, would pose more of a problem, but I believe I am capable of admiring the artistry of men to whose doctrinal beliefs I am unremittingly hostile. (To take only one example, I am an admirer of the prose of Louis-Ferdinand Céline, author of *Journey to the End of Night*, who was a fanatic anti-Semite.)

But Fassbinder's films are an institutionalized amateur night. They are inept, wooden, stilted. The characters are walking ideas or allegorical symbols. His typical films are made up of endless tableaux with static camera in which inexperienced actors improvise lifelessly, "acting adjectives," as Stanislavsky would have said. The scenes often approach complete stasis. The frame does not move. Actions do not develop. Emotions do not change. It was Fassbinder's conviction that life under capitalism was alienated and stunted, so in his films characters begin scenes alienated and stunted, and they end scenes alienated and stunted. It seemed beyond his capacity to show the alienating and stunting processes at work. The early Warhol-Morrissey films (*Flesh, Heat, Trash*), to which Fassbinder's could technically be compared, also used static camera and were of an even more ostentatious slovenliness, but they had an idiosyncratic vitality which Fassbinder films do not possess. In the last years of his life, when he was given bigger budget and sets and period costumes for such movies as *The Marriage of Maria Braun* and *Lili Marleen*, Fassbinder was completely beyond his depth. There was rather more to look at, but the films were really no better.

On the set of Fassbinder's posthumous *Querelle de Brest*, actors Brad Davis and Franco Nero were reportedly "surprised at the apparent scarcity of direction they got." Fassbinder himself has been described as "hiding in corners and acting almost like a visitor on the set and not the director." But to anyone who knows anything about the way motion pictures are made, the most revealing fact of all is that Fassbinder almost never looked at his "dailies"—formerly called "rushes." I have never heard of such a thing. (And, God knows, I once even acted, avocationally, in a film by Jean-Luc Godard.) I have known directors who considered their art as that of "provoking accidents," but I have never known a director not to take a look at the accidents he'd managed to provoke. A man who makes a film like that might have written the screenplay (as Fassbinder did more or less), and he might be responsible for having brought the whole thing about in the way a theatrical producer might be responsible for staging a happening, but I am not certain I would consider such a film as under his control. To my way of thinking, Fassbinder's movies—and they look it—are almost undirected.

DURING the 70's, unappreciated by audiences in their native Germany, Fassbinder and the other lonely, subsidized directors of the New German Cinema set out on their *Wanderjahre*, specializing in the film-festival circuit, where they began to earn considerable kudos. Fassbinder won the International Critics Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1974, and other foreign honors. By general agreement the Big Four of the new cinema were Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, and Volker Schlöndorff (whose latest film to be released in the U.S., set in Lebanon, was the fervently pro-PLO *Circle of Deceit*). In varying groupings they dominated attention at the 1975 film festivals in both London and New York (*Village Voice*: "The Germans are coming! The Germans are coming!") And so it went. I trust all this foreign peer-group acclaim produced great gratification among German cultural officials, but it did not translate into noticeably stronger box-office returns for German films even abroad. Foreign movies in the U.S. hardly matter commercially, but France, as I have explained, is very open to the cinema of foreign countries. In 1972, when the *Old* German Cinema was still firmly in the saddle, the German share of the French market was 3.3 percent. By 1980, with the New German Cinema riding high, as it were, this figure had dropped to 1.8 percent. There is some irony in the fact that when Germany finally cracked the French and even the American markets in 1981 and 1982, it was with two films that owed little to the New German Cinema. To everyone's astonishment the unprepossessing *Christina F.* outdid Robert Redford's *Brubaker* in France, while *Das Boot*, the story of a German U-boat in World War II, still on release in America, is already the biggest film success in German history, both here and in Germany.

Based on a huge German best-seller, *Das Boot* is directed by Wolfgang Petersen, who has gone about saying it is "antiwar" and that it shows that war makes beasts of men, and so on. Perhaps he felt obliged to make statements of this sort to avoid giving the impression he approved of World War II, or perhaps thought the Nazis' cause was just. Possibly it is lost from the memory of the race that even such men as our own Theodore Roosevelt, who believed in the tonic effects of war, never claimed it was pleasant or agreeable. The fact is that *Das Boot* —and I suspect Petersen knows this quite well—shows military men, fighting in a cause that was not only doomed but diabolical, behaving with the most extreme stamina and courage. Along with Australia's *Breaker Morant* and Hollywood's new *An Officer and a Gentleman* (set in peacetime), it is the most pro-military movie to have been made in the West since the great upheavals of the late 60's. The cause, in such stories, is almost immaterial. The outcome is most certainly so. The Alamo was lost, after all. But William James felt that the qualities men showed during such ordeals were necessary for a nation's survival. If nations did not produce such men, they succumbed.

At the German Film Prize festivities last June, where the awards are made by special jury, *Das Boot* was of necessity very much in the running. Also in competition were a new Fassbinder, a new Herzog, a film based on *The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann, and the latest from Margarethe von Trotta (Volker Schlöndorff's wife), *Die Bleierne Zeit*. Called *Marianne and Juliane* when it recently played briefly in New York, it is a work of scarcely veiled apologetics for Baader-Meinhof terrorism, and since it is not at all allegorical it seems even more extreme than Fassbinder. The surprise

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isn't that *Marianne and Juliane* carried off the top prize, which is about what I would expect from a German film jury these days (or for that matter Italian, since it had already won the top award at Venice), but that someone let slip that during the six months of *Das Boot*'s triumphal runs in Germany an apparent majority of the jury had never even seen it. This is a degree of narrowness rarely met, even among custodians of a nation's culture.

IN AN essay published in the *American Sociologist*, Paul Hollander points out that in recent times the structure and institutions of society have come to be held responsible, not only for social and racial justice, the pattern of distribution of wealth, and economic misery and deprivation, but for the highly personal problems of the individual. In this new style of thought, the individual is seen to be less and less responsible for his own happiness. If he does not attain personal fulfillment and self-realization, it is the fault of "society." Examining statements by young Americans who joined the Venceremos Brigade in Cuba, Hollander observes that it is hard to imagine Robespierre, Bakunin, Lenin, or Trotsky voicing such sentiments as the following: "I am all fucked up. Too many problems that I have to deal with. I am amazingly selfish . . . that's certainly how we are taught in a capitalist society, and I am a child of capitalism." Or: "I am beginning to understand how very thin is the line between neurosis and oppression, and consequently how in the most profound way the solution to what formerly seemed our most personal problems is deeply political." Or: "Amerika does a lot of ugly things to people. It puts walls between them. . . ." And so on.

As it happens, this kind of thing is the core of the politics of Rainer Werner Fassbinder. His films show an endless stream of people in advanced stages of neurosis, social apathy, alienation, and anomie. And both the films and Fassbinder's explicit statements make it clear that all this neurosis and anomie are caused by the "capitalist system," often referred to more murkily and forebodingly (as indeed it was at the time of Weimar) as *"das System."* Of course, Fassbinder had available to him within his own linguistic culture—as most alienated Western artists do not—a state, East Germany, which is organized according to a completely different system, Communism, but he displayed singularly little interest in investigating whether the Communist system, despite its lower economic efficiency and bracing absence of freedom of expression, also produces neurosis, alienation, and social apathy. It is a question that did not stimulate Fassbinder's artistic imagination.

Almost all Fassbinder's films have what he proudly proclaimed to be "fatalistic" endings, usually accompanied by ringing declarations that the more fatalistic they were the more optimistic they were. What lay behind these seemingly nonsensical statements was that Fassbinder, in his own frazzled way, was a social determinist. As long as *das System* was in place, people would be unhappy. His approach, as I have indicated, was not comparative. He did not explore how happy people were under other systems. Nor was he programmatic. His films express criticism of capitalism, of course, of Communists living in the West, and even of anarchists, but they give no indication of the manner in which deliverance might come. Subsumed in all Fassbinder's films is the belief that there could be a far, far better world, where there would be no neurosis, or oppression, or perhaps even pain. But Fassbinder did not seem to think it was his role to lay out a plan of action to help bring this better world about. The world we live in is debased and worthless. Fassbinder, subsidized by German cultural officials, did his best to bring it low. Others would take it from there.

One of Fassbinder's quainter traits was his preoccupation—evident in his films—with "domination," a word particularly meaningful for someone coming, as he did, from the homosexual culture. "Sure, I liked this," he once said. "I like to dominate." But later when he reflected on what he was doing he would "feel grieved and end this dependency" (by which he meant, end the relationship). It was capitalism, he would explain, that gave us this lust. Although Fassbinder once defined Marxism as a "good idea formulated in an inhuman manner," I am not aware that he ever expanded on whether anyone "dominated" anyone else east of the Elbe. One of his deepest beliefs was that the will to dominate was engendered by capitalism. Once we get rid of capitalism, all men will live on terms of perfect equality, and no man will lift his hand against another. And sin will fall away, and we will be clad in white raiment, and all stand pure and shining in the light of Socialism.

FASSBINDER asked to be judged by his *oeuvre* in its entirety, so I am obliged to give some account of those first thirty-odd movies which established his reputation at international film festivals and among movie critics, if not with the German public. There is wide consensus on Fassbinder's objectives among critics, including Ruth McCormick, a left-wing film scholar, who published a long study on Fassbinder's work in the late 70's in *Cinéaste*. By way of introduction, Miss McCormick writes that most talented U.S. directors seem "strangled by the demands of the marketplace," a number of them "in the corporate doghouses for having hatched multimillion dollar turkeys." It was "happily obvious" to American radicals, on the other hand, she says, that "almost all the German newcomers were critical of the status quo, some even attempting to challenge with their aesthetics the established bourgeois view of the world." Of Fassbinder she writes: "His anger at the prevailing order is all-pervasive"; his goal is to make potential revolutionaries "see clearly into the social and economic forces that keep them down" as well as to "root out the psychological structures of domination within themselves." "Abominated by all good, conservative Germans," she assures us, Fassbinder "totally destroys the bourgeois notion of the independent individual." He shows that we are unable to change our social relations "because of the ideologies we have been fed, like slow poison, since infancy." Miss McCormick ardently supports the demands of

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Fassbinder, and others, for government subsidies to express this all-pervasive anger at the prevailing order.

Now, the movies:

Katzelmacher (1969), Fassbinder's second feature film, set in Munich, is a group portrait of nine or ten young, lower-middle-class people suffering from anomie. They are listless, petty, unhappy. In their midst suddenly erupts a lovable, warm-hearted Greek *Gastarbeiter* ("guest worker"). Since these foreign "guest workers" are subject to appreciable social discrimination in Germany, it has been an article of faith of the New German Cinema that they are not only as good as Germans, but better. This particular Greek (played by Fassbinder himself) brings with him the vitality and vibrancy of the Mediterranean, so different from the cold glumness of the young Germans. I give Miss McCormick's summation: "unloving couples, 'friends' who never really communicate, sexual relations undertaken out of boredom or for money, conformity in the face of group pressure, worries about money, unlikable but not totally unsympathetic people dominated by the unseen forces of internalized repression and a marketplace society. . . ." Everything ends badly, of course. This is Fassbinder's picture of the Federal Republic of Germany the year Willy Brandt became Chancellor.

In *Gods of the Plague* (also 1969), a crime movie, Miss McCormick says "the crooks are seen to be victims of society, and certainly more honest than the cops." *Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?* (Fassbinder's fourth film of 1969—the reader must not think of him as a picky perfectionist) is vintage Fassbinder. Herr R. is a draftsman, married and the father of a small son with a speech impediment. His job is dull, his boss domineering, his friends boring. One night, without warning, Herr R. bludgeons his wife, his son, and a visiting friend to death. But why should Herr R. commit such a horrible series of actions? No student of Fassbinder will ponder long over the answer. It was *das System*, of course. It was all that slow poison, dripping, dripping.

The Merchant of Four Seasons (1971, two years and eight films later) is still another tale of alienation. Hans Epp, a humble fruit peddler, is the family failure. He is a nice man, who wants only a simple life, but our repressive society does him in, too. He has a heart attack. His wife cuckolds him. (These things apparently do not happen in socialist societies.) To help him on the job, he hires an old friend, who makes a go of the business for him. Finding that he is unnecessary and unwanted, Hans drinks himself to death. Miss McCormick writes that Hans Epp "is a prisoner of the society in which he lives," and that the film proves that "There is no place for the autonomous individual in today's world."

To grind out movies like this was as easy for Fassbinder as breathing. *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972) never leaves the apartment of the eponymous Petra, a successful fashion designer. It is a lesbian story, all about domination, which we learn is bad. In *Jail Bait* (also 1972), a nineteen-year-old chicken plucker named Franz is jailed for statutory rape. When he is released, his fourteen-year-old mistress, Hanni, persuades him, out of fear, to murder her reactionary father. But they are caught. Again, Miss McCormick: "She, coming out of a stuffy, overfurnished home full of religious icons and he, out of the bloody alienation of the chicken factory, were doomed from the start."

Effi Briest is the literary masterpiece of Theodor Fontane, considered Germany's first master of the realistic novel. It is a brilliant work, set entirely among the Prussian aristocracy. There are fashionable marriages, grand estates, an adulterous liaison, a spectacular duel, the adulterer killed on the field of honor. All this is far, far too much sparkle for Rainer Werner Fassbinder and in his movie adaptation (1974) we consequently see almost none of it. The story is reduced to what Miss McCormick calls "a series of tableaux depicting the oppressive reality of the woman's everyday life." It shows "the crushing of a lively spirit" by "an unresponsive world concerned only with unquestioning conformity." This is not how the novel ends, of course. Like many people in real life, Effi has more spunk than is allowed in the world of R. W. Fassbinder, and ends her days not crushed but comfortable and happy. It took some doing, but Fassbinder's aristocratic Effi has much in common with the modern, middle-class heroine of his *Fear of Fear* (1975): "Little by little, her life is revealed —the routine housework, the neat apartment, the whining kids, the nosey mother-in-law, the indifferent husband—that make her uneventful life a trap."

As the reader will have gathered, Fassbinder is a somewhat monotonous storyteller. He tells the same tale again and again, and he tells it badly. His style is nil. The acting is usually appalling. There is nothing to look at. There is nowhere to hide. If you've seen it all before, and do not vibrate to his message, the experience can be excruciating.

It is a strange comment on the New German Cinema that in 1979, after making no fewer than 31 feature films, Fassbinder at last had what even a recent publicity release described as his "first commercial success in Germany": *The Marriage of Maria Braun*. Fassbinder had a lifelong ambition to make a "subversive cinema for a mass audience," and I can only assume that this was it. A director who through 1975 had never spent as much as a quarter-of-a-million dollars on a movie (a pittance in these times), Fassbinder was given a multimillion-dollar budget. He had crowd scenes, complicated sets, pretty costumes. He framed, and cut, and edited, just like a grown-up (or someone did it for him). The camera moved; he panned and zoomed. It was all very clumsily done, and the acting was as stilted as ever, but the product was a passable facsimile of a real movie. Fassbinder's formula for subverting a mass audience was to give it all these costumes and sets, all this movement and action and plot to whet its appetite, and then convert it to revolutionary socialism by imposing on the plot a didactic allegory. *Maria Braun* turned out to be the first of three films on the same theme, a denunciation of the Germany of Konrad Adenauer. This was basically the 50's, called in

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most textbooks the years of Germany's "astonishing postwar recovery" or "economic miracle." They were also years in which democratic institutions, extinguished in Germany during a very dark period, were reestablished. But for Fassbinder the 50's (which ended when he was thirteen) were entirely a time of repression and debased materialism.

Maria Braun's husband is a Wehrmacht soldier, evidently representing the Old Germany. Maria, who works her way up from bar girl to the ranks of the corporate rich, is to all appearances the New Germany. She becomes the mistress of the head of her company, a Frenchman, the two of them constituting the New Europe. The Frenchman dies, leaving Maria his fortune (Germany triumphant), and she remarries her old husband, who has been in prison for the murder of Maria's American lover. So the New Germany reunites with the Old Germany, and Hitler rules the world, I suppose, or perhaps precipitates a new calamity. Frankly I wouldn't be the least surprised to hear that German audiences, unaccustomed to allegory, saw in the film a simple success story.

FASSBINDER'S *Lili Marleen* (1981), with a budget of $10 million, also did well in Germany (though far less well than *Das Boot*). Shot and written with the director's usual awkwardness, it is nonetheless the least typical of his movies, with Fassbinder's usual political message somehow going adrift. Although *Lili Marleen* is nominally anti-Hitler (hardly a novel attitude), and while it is his only film set in the Nazi period, I can only say that the director's hostility to the Nazis is not nearly so intense as his hatred of the Nazis' successor regime in the Federal Republic. *Lili Marleen*'s Nazis do such things as torturing a prisoner by playing the song "Lili Marleen" to him over and over again—not exactly the worst atrocity that has ever been attributed to the Gestapo or the SS. The movie is the story of a famous singer (played by Fassbinder standby Hanna Schygulla, who in Schlöndorff's *Circle of Deceit* plays the German heroine in love with a PLO officer). The public at large no doubt took this singer to be a sympathetic character since she has a Jewish lover (Giancarlo Giannini) and the role is fuzzily rendered at best. Perhaps I, alone—since I have at hand the code book constituted by Fassbinder's interviews—know that she is a bad person, because she falls into raptures at the luxurious appointments of her new living quarters ("nice apartments" were singled out time and again by the director as the cleft hoof of materialism). She is also very pleased to meet Hitler (ascending a ceremonial staircase into dazzling radiance as if going to meet God).

I seriously think Fassbinder would have found much that was congenial to him in the Nazi regime. It was not materialistic. It preached an exalting creed that lifted men out of themselves. It was cruel (there is tremendous unavowed cruelty in Fassbinder's films), but it was consecrated to strength, the power of will. I have no difficulty whatever in reading Fassbinder as a Nazi personality type with just a few inversions. He could quite easily be seen as a lost spiritual Nazi, adrift, despairing, with nothing left to believe in. In *Lili Marleen*, which deals with Nazism, he certainly shows nothing of the absolutely obsessive hatred displayed throughout his entire work for *das System*, the pluralistic, liberal, democratic society in which he lived. *Lili Marleen* came in for explicit criticism for its portrait of a rich Swiss Jew (Mel Ferrer), who springs Jews from the Nazis' grasp by using his financial resources. But of course Fassbinder reminded us that we should never discuss the Nazis' treatment of the Jews without recalling the Jews' "connection with money." Vincent Canby of the New York *Times* wrote recently that there was a suggestion in a film Fassbinder made in 1980 that the director "might be moving from the far Left to the far Right." In Fassbinder's case—as indeed in many others—I would not consider this a very great distance.

FASSBINDER worked with such speed, and carelessness, that at his death he left behind three movies, none of which had yet been released in the United States, two of them not even in Germany. *Querelle de Brest* is a homosexual love story by France's Jean Genet, in whose works homosexuality and crime are seen as rebellions against the established order. The other two were *Lola* and *Veronika Voss*, the second and third films of Fassbinder's trilogy of philippics against Adenauer's Germany. (He was also planning to make a film on Rosa Luxemburg, to be played by Jane Fonda.)

The germ of *Lola*, which opened recently in New York, was *The Blue Angel* by Josef von Sternberg, a film masterpiece of pre-Hitler Germany based on the novel by Heinrich Mann. It is the story of the enslavement and degradation of a respectable *Gymnasium* professor by a low cabaret singer named Lola Lola, played by Marlene Dietrich. (*"Ich bin die fesche Lola, der Liebling der Saison. . . ."*) Fassbinder, of course, politicizes the story (the film opens and closes with the portrait of Konrad Adenauer). The *Gymnasium* professor becomes a provincial building commissioner. Lola remains a cabaret singer. But the cabaret itself becomes a grand and gaudy place, a combination night club and whorehouse, where all the local wheeler-dealers meet to discuss their corrupt projects while pawing the women. It is 1955, and West Germany is being reconstructed under the free-enterprise system, so it is all very corrupt. Now the city's leading building contractor, it just so happens, owns the cabaret-bordello, and is also Lola's lover, and he wants something out of the new commissioner, and that something is building permits. Since the contractor is, naturally, very corrupt, he puts his girlfriend up to enslaving the commissioner, an idealistic ninny, who swallows the bait whole. The contractor gets his permits, and Lola's share of the take is ownership of the cabaret-bordello. For good measure, she marries the commissioner (as in *The Blue Angel*), promptly cuckolds her new husband (as in *The Blue Angel*) with her old friend the contractor. And that's about it. That's the way things work in that big old whorehouse, capitalism.

Something odd happens in Fassbinder's *Lola*. The title role is played by Barbara Sukowa (last seen

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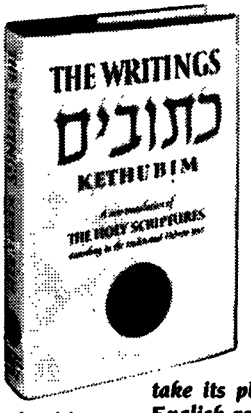

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in America playing with sympathy the Ulrike Meinhof-Kathy Boudin-type terrorist in *Marianne and Juliane*). In *Lola*, Miss Sukowa, historically speaking, is going up against Marlene Dietrich in what I consider Dietrich's one truly great role, and it is a sorry spectacle. She is also a frightful singer.

But the true oddity of the film is Mario Adorf, who plays Schuckert, the contractor. It must surely be clear that Schuckert is intended to be the villain of this movie. He is capitalism, domination, corruption made flesh. The problem is that, unlike the usual Fassbinder road company, a gang of resolutely mediocre performers who stalk through his films like the living dead, Mario Adorf is an absolutely first-rate actor. Given a role to play, he tried to make the character as plausible and human as he could. Schuckert is beefy, witty, cynical—as engaging a rascal as you're likely to meet. His performance threw off a number of critics. One wrote that the film suggests a certain "mellowing" of Fassbinder's attitude toward our society, another that it has "almost a happy ending." The simple fact is that while Fassbinder was hiding in a corner, cleaning his nails, or otherwise engaged, Mario Adorf, as the saying goes, ran away with his movie, almost rehabilitating capitalism. My guess is that Fassbinder didn't even notice.

BEYOND politics, beyond Left, beyond Right, beyond a secular millennium, I have a private view of Rainer Werner Fassbinder. In the French literary description of the romantic character, I was always struck by one defining trait: a romantic had *le dégoût de la vie*, translated crudely, "disgust with life." After long exposure to Fassbinder's films, I cannot avoid thinking that he had the most profound "disgust with life." I know no social prescriptions for this malady. The French also say that the romantics loved death. And so Fassbinder died, on June 10, 1982, at the age of thirty-six, from what was described as the combined effect of alcohol and drugs. To which I can only say, *Ainsi soît-il*, which means both "So be it," and "Amen."

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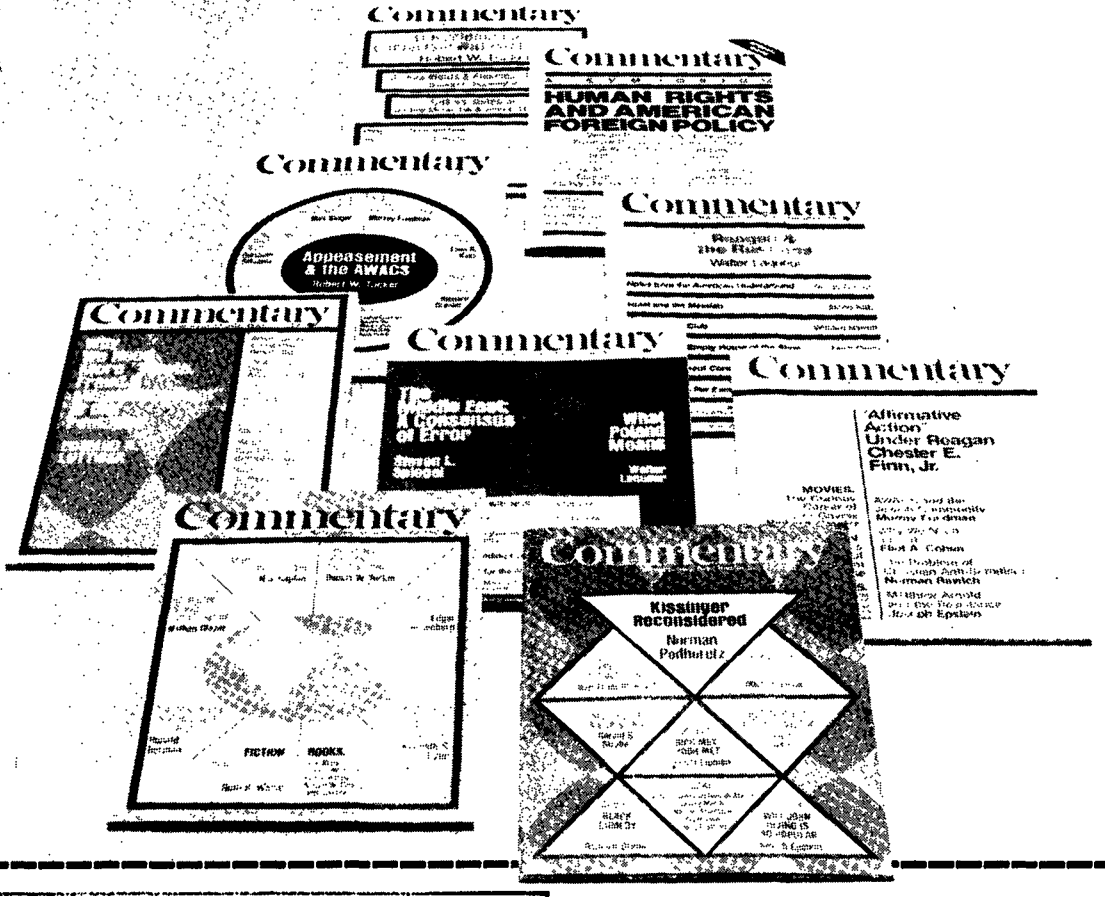

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Books in Review

America & the Jews

THE REAL ANTI-SEMITISM IN AMERICA. By NATHAN and RUTH ANN PERLMUTTER. *Arbor House. 303 pp. $15.50.*

Reviewed by LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ

ABOUT two years ago, the level of anti-Semitic violence throughout the United States seemed suddenly on the rise. According to statistics compiled by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), there were 377 reported incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism and violence in 1980, triple the number for 1979. In 1981 the number of such incidents more than doubled. While there was little doubt that the primary motive behind these acts of personal harassment and property damage was to victimize Jews, no one was quite sure what to make of them. Did they foreshadow a new cycle of anti-Semitism in American society? Or did they, perhaps, represent little more than a passing teen-age fad in suburban neighborhoods?

The answer one gave to this question depended in part on where one lived. New York Jews, a hardy lot, seemed to me, a born New Yorker, to take the news in stride. But during a three-month stay in supposedly laid-back California, I noticed that Jews there were responding much more intensely. Indeed, when I addressed an audience of California Jews on "Anti-Semitism in the Perspective of Jewish History," and attempted to show that the recent incidents, however alarming, nevertheless did not indicate a potential for the rise of an organized anti-Semitic movement—to show, in other words, that in anti-Semitism as in other matters affecting Jews, America really was different from the pattern we associate with the Jewish past in Europe, or even with the Jewish present in places like Argentina—I was told politely but firmly that I did not understand how bad things were, how parlous was the condition of the Jews in the United States.

This agitated and, I believe, somewhat disproportionate response reflects feelings of unease with which the Jews of Los Angeles, like Jews all over the United States, have been troubled for well over a decade. Many American Jews, however prosperous and successful, have been beset by inchoate feelings of anxiety which they have been unable to articulate. Somehow or other, the position of Jews in America no longer seems to them as secure as it once did. Ever since 1967, when Israel's victory in the Six-Day war sparked a rise of hostile rhetoric, and when anti-Semitism erupted with force in the black community, American Jews have had a premonitory feeling that the climate around them was changing for the worse. And if for a long time the actual evidence seemed uncertain and sporadic, the eruption of unmistakably anti-Semitic incidents in the late 70's gave tangible substance to these nagging Jewish anxieties.

But what *is* the nature of anti-Semitism in America today? It is precisely this question that Nathan and Ruth Ann Perlmutter address in their new book, *The Real Anti-Semitism in America*, an indispensable work for anyone who cares not only about the security of Jews but also about the many faces that America shows to the world. Nathan Perlmutter is the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, but this book is by no means an institutional document. In fact, it is a rather personal work, imprinted with a distinctly individual idiom in its language as in its substance. The Perlmutters summon up their own memories, describe their own experiences, and distill the lessons of their own readings in Jewish history. In a judicious balance of moral passion and political sobriety, they explore the locales in the United States where anti-Semitism is centered, analyze the social, political, and psychological characteristics of leaders and followers of anti-Semitic organizations, evaluate the extent and effectiveness of their operations, and assess the degree of danger posed to Jews and to Jewish security.

THE Perlmutters begin by summarizing the latest and most substantial public-opinion poll on anti-Semitism in America, which was conducted in 1981 by the opinion-research company of Yankelovich, Skelly, and White on behalf of the American Jewish Committee. To give the study historical depth, Yankelovich compared the findings of this national survey, based on 1,250 personal interviews, with those of a survey conducted in 1964 by a research team at the University of California at Berkeley.

The Yankelovich survey found that anti-Semitic attitudes declined significantly during the past two decades, although the statistics still seem rather high for comfort: 45 percent of those polled in 1981 were unprejudiced, while 23 percent were prejudiced, and 32 percent were neutral. If we add the neutrals to the prejudiced, the figures are hardly reassuring. The Perlmutters put it this way: "The Gentile fever seems to be subsiding, but gone it isn't." Older people, and people with little education, tended to express anti-Semitic attitudes more frequently than younger and better educated people. Anti-Semitism among blacks was more prevalent than among whites. Finally, the Yankelovich survey showed that attitudes toward American Jews "were significantly correlated with attitudes toward Israel."

The responses of the better educated need some explication and qualification. Do respondents tell the truth when asked their opinions? On most questions they probably do, but on questions probing prejudice and bigotry, I suspect that not all do —and certainly not the better educated. For these are precisely the people least likely to express socially

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LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ *is a veteran contributor to* COMMENTARY. *Her latest book is* On Equal Terms: Jews in America 1881-1981 *(Holt, Rinehart & Winston).*

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undesirable opinions. I would not be at all surprised if the low anti-Semitic response among the better educated is a function of their sophistication rather than a true reflection of their views. But then, it could be said in defense of the findings that if the present climate makes people feel that prejudiced opinions are not *comme il faut*, then anti-Semitism really is at a low level.*

As for the recent incidents of vandalism and violence, the Perlmutters find that these were mainly committed by teen-agers acting alone, or in twos or threes, and were sparked in equal measure by mischievousness, maliciousness, and bigotry. But the Perlmutters discount these incidents as a significant anti-Semitic factor because the perpetrators have no political organization and no built-in structure that can be developed or exploited for systematic anti-Semitic goals. The Perlmutters also downgrade the Ku Klux Klan, because of its present low estate in membership and influence. They do not think that Jews are in imminent danger of pogroms.†

WHERE, then, is the "real" anti-Semitism lodged? The Perlmutters write that groups which Jews once regarded as friends and allies are now adversaries, and groups which Jews once regarded with suspicion, even with antipathy, may now be allies. Protestants of liberal denomination (in contrast to fundamentalists), leftists, and blacks no longer share common interests and goals with most American Jews. Fundamentalists and political conservatives are more likely nowadays to be on the same side as Jews on certain issues which affect Jewish interests.

* For a critical analysis of public-opinion surveys of anti-Semitism, see my essay "Can Anti-Semitism Be Measured?," which first appeared in COMMENTARY, July 1970, and was later updated in my book, *The Jewish Presence: Essays in Identity and History* (1977).

† In contrast, a shoddy book by Ernest Volkman, *A Legacy of Hate* (Franklin Watts, 358 pp., $16.95), tries to exploit the ripple of anti-Semitic incidents by sounding a general alarm in a chapter called, of all things, "Kristnallnacht." Stretching evidence is only one of this book's flaws. Parasitism is another: the author lives off other writers' works without appropriate acknowledgment.

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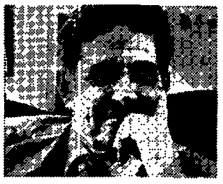
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Affirmative action, to which the Perlmutters devote a full chapter, is a case in point and one of the important domestic issues on which blacks and Jews have diverged.

At this late date, readers of COMMENTARY will find these conclusions familiar, even commonplace. But for many Jews, whose lifelong commitment to liberalism has kept a tight leash on their old and by now sclerotic ideas, the message that the Perlmutters bring may well be a disturbing one.

Nevertheless, it is true. Our political landscape has been radically altered from the days when liberal Protestants and blacks were friends of the Jews. After all, it is nearly fifty years since Franklin Delano Roosevelt became the 32nd President of the United States and since Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. The demographic configuration of the Jewish population today has changed profoundly from what it was before World War II, and so has the psychological complexion of the Jews.

As everyone knows, the major catalyst of this transformation has been the state of Israel. Israel's establishment in 1948 and its evolution since then have shaped a new agenda for American Jews. At its creation, the Jewish state enjoyed the political support and the moral approval of the international community, except for the Arab world. Then, as the Soviet Union sought to expand its influence in the Middle East by wooing the Arabs, anti-Israel propaganda began to spread widely throughout the Third World, among the so-called uncommitted nations, and finally among their sympathizers in the developing countries of the West. In the 1960's and 70's, Israel became increasingly isolated, a Jewish island in a raging ocean of hostility, a pariah among the nations.

Here lay a bitter irony for Jews and especially for Zionists. As the founders of Israel conceived it, the Jewish state was expected to transform—that is, to "normalize"—the status of the Jews throughout the world and thus to eliminate anti-Semitism. Instead Israel, as the embodiment of the aspirations of the Jewish people, became the butt of worldwide anti-Jewish prejudice.

There were, to be sure, real and vital political interests in the Arab opposition to a Jewish state in Palestine. But it is a common pattern in history that a bona-fide conflict of interests in which Jews are involved, whether as individuals or as a collective, quickly becomes tarnished by anti-Jewish invective. Thus the original conflict becomes perverted and its moral level debased. And so it was with the conflict between the Jews and the Arabs in the Middle East.

The Yankelovich survey, it will be recalled, found that attitudes toward American Jews "were significantly correlated with attitudes toward Israel." While the survey drew no particular conclusion from the finding, that correlation is, to my mind, the critical indicator of anti-Semitism today.

Many Jews have been hesitant to call attention to the new symbiotic relationship between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism lest they be accused of trying to shield Israel from valid criticism. But enemies of the Jews have not hesitated to use criticism of Israel as a cover for anti-Semitism, and the phenomenon has not gone unnoticed even in non-Jewish quarters. The Perlmutters cite a declaration issued by a German Evangelical church group in 1981 which defined the "New Anti-Semitism" as nothing more than the old anti-Semitism hiding behind criticism of Israel. The German Evangelicals explicitly state that Israel is and should be open to criticism as any government is and should be, but they note with alarm that criticism of Israel has increasingly become a vehicle—and a pretext—for anti-Semitism. One paragraph of their statement reads:

> It is anti-Semitism when erroneous actions by the Israeli government are judged one-sidedly, without regard for the actions of Israel's enemies, and are pointed out and judged more sharply than similar actions by other governments.

In the course of their history, Jews have been persecuted for being whatever they were at any given time. Because Israel has become the most precious collective entity of the Jewish people, the embodiment of Jewish civilization, and the hope for

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Jewish survival, it has, most glaringly since 1967, become the primary target of anti-Semites throughout the world. As one reads the documentation which the Perlmutters provide on the presence of anti-Semitism on the Left, among liberal Protestant church groups—not least the National Council of Churches—and among blacks, it becomes clear that nowadays all the old anti-Semitic stereotypes have been displaced onto Israel.

At first blush it might appear that an anti-Semitism rooted among the Left, among liberal Protestant church groups, and among blacks would not pose too formidable a threat to American Jews. After all, the organizations of the political Left are relatively small. As for liberal Protestant church groups, one need only map the geographical distribution of American Protestant denominations to see that liberal Protestants constitute small enclaves of Christianity and that they are vastly outnumbered by the Catholics in the Northeast and by the fundamentalists in the South and the Midwest. Surely most low-church Protestants feel a closer affinity to the fundamentalists with whom they identify by class and status than to big-city, well-to-do Protestants who attend the services at Riverside Church and its equivalents elsewhere.

Nevertheless, ever since the countercultural revolution and the anti-war movement of the 60's, the influence of the Left in all its varieties has penetrated into areas which, in another time, might have proved resistant. The two most conspicuous such areas are the universities and the media. A recent public-opinion survey among media professionals shows that on a wide variety of national and international issues, they tend to hold political views considerably to the Left of the general public. An automatic sympathy with the Third World, a romantic idealization of selected groups of "oppressed peoples," and a tendency to denigrate the political values of the free world are some of the hallmarks of the media "mindset," and in the case of the Middle East they have resulted in blatantly slanted coverage of Israel's policies and actions,

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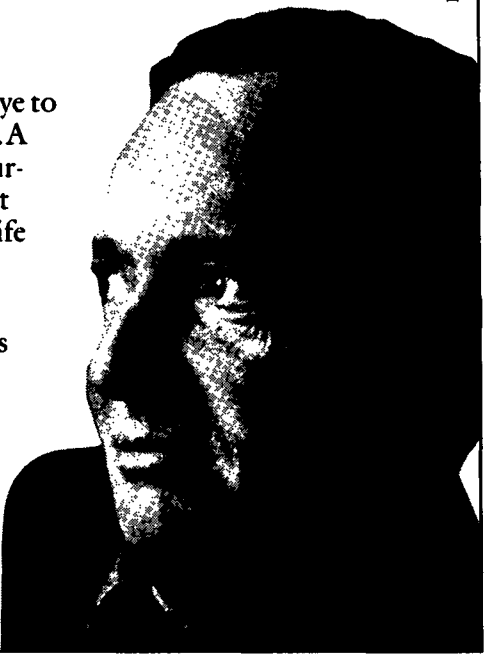

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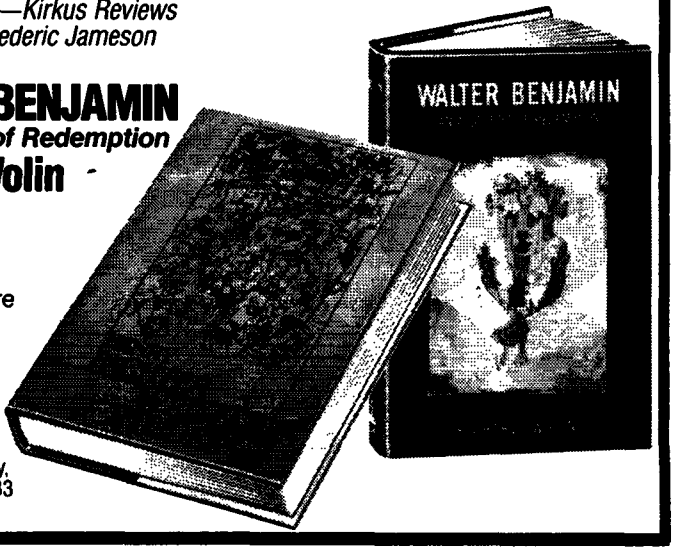

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most dramatically during the recent fighting in Lebanon.*

The UN is another major source for the dissemination of anti-Semitism. It has in fact been the chief conduit of Soviet and Arab anti-Jewish propaganda, even long before the passage in 1975 of the infamous resolution equating Zionism with racism. On the subject of the UN, the Perlmutters provide a rich body of documentation drawn from the relentless flow of rhetoric in that "amphitheater for the Esperanto of anti Semitism." Americans may discount the impact of this as so much hot air, but the ceaseless production of anti-Jewish propaganda at the UN has at the very least helped to "naturalize" anti-Semitism, making it commonplace and acceptable in daily discourse.

WHAT conclusions do the Perlmutters reach with respect to anti-Semitism in the United States? They are primarily interested, of course, in shaping policy for the Jewish community, and in this regard they do not think it unseemly to profess their self-interest. Unlike others who speak in the name of the Jewish community, the Perlmutters do not mistake the liberal agenda for the Jewish agenda. Neither, however, do they identify conservative interests with Jewish interests, even though there now is greater congruity between the two than between Jews and liberals. The Perlmutters say: "If here and there, liberals or conservatives are potential allies, the alliance should evolve *ad hoc,* when our interests coincide, and we ought not to mistake liaisons of convenience for lasting marriage."

The Perlmutters note that the fundamental political and economic problems which America confronts today—oil and petrodollars, defense and disarmament, the conflict between Communism and freedom—have and will continue to have a profound impact on Jewish security and even on Israel's future. The positions taken by Jewish leaders on these issues, they argue, ought to address the interests of the United States, but they ought to be true to Jewish interests as well. The Perlmutters' hope is that Jews will have learned from the bitter experience of history to distinguish friends from enemies, to exercise both flexibility and imagination in building alliances and defenses, so that they will be able to protect themselves and their children against the deadly fallout of anti-Semitism.

Underlying this hope is a sober confidence, which I happen to share, in America's traditions of political liberty, social equality, and religious freedom. For, as I told my audience in Los Angeles, America *is* different. The history of the Jews in America has, until now, testified to that difference.

Revisionist Biography

JOHN FOSTER DULLES: THE ROAD TO POWER. By RONALD W. PRUESSEN. *Free Press. 575 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by ARNOLD BEICHMAN

THIS IS the first of a projected two-volume intellectual biography of John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower's Secretary of State from 1953 to 1959. It brings Dulles to the point when, at the age of sixty-four, he is to win the coveted appointment and his brother, Allen, is to become director of the CIA.

Ronald W. Pruessen's publishers describe him as a "revisionist scholar" which, today, is like describing a professor of astronomy as someone who believes the earth is flat. During the 1960's and the early 1970's, revisionist historians vied with each other to demonstrate hitherto unsuspected pacifist tendencies in Stalin's postwar foreign policies and to blame President Truman for instigating the cold war. But the revisionist school went bankrupt some years ago as large deposits of post-World War II archives in the British Foreign Office, the State Department, and the CIA became available to historians. Far from bolstering the revisionist theses, the documents showed that U.S. and British statesmen tried to appease Stalin in the (vain) hope that he would behave. As if oblivious to all this, Pruessen is still expressing gratitude and admiration for the work of Gabriel Kolko, Walter LaFeber, William Appleman Williams, and other revisionist historians.

Pruessen does, it is true, make gestures in the direction of objectivity. He says that when he began research for the Dulles biography, he expected merely "to fill in the details of a rough sketch of Dulles as a rabid and unbalanced anti-Communist, a megalomaniacal Presbyterian preacher, a viciously partisan Republican, and a McCarthyite pushover." Instead, he found Dulles to be a man who "combined certain narrow interests with considerable intelligence and shrewdness . . . a frequently devout pragmatist with a fundamental concern for the condition of the American economy . . . a selective Presbyterian piety that always involved cognizance of the materialistic side of the Calvinist coin . . . who knew the uses of ideology and melodramatic rhetoric . . . a complex amalgam." This, of course, is a "complex amalgam" of essentially unattractive qualities. What Pruessen seems to be saying is that whereas he began his labors expecting to disclose simple monstrousness, he found that the monstrousness comes in different parts.

DULLES's interest in international affairs was developed early in life, not only because of family background and affiliations but also because the Wall Street law firm in which he achieved his early eminence, Sullivan and Cromwell, attracted corporate, banking, and foreign government clients. His Wall Street connections, according to Pruessen, helped "develop a particular interest in the commercial and

* Of course it may be unfair to attribute all the deficiencies of the media to prejudice. Some account has to be taken as well of the impressive ignorance which many journalists and reporters demonstrate when it comes to the history and politics of the Middle East. For a recent analysis of the political attitudes of media professionals, see "Media and Business Elites," by S. Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman, *Public Opinion,* October/November 1981. An excellent essay by David Sidorsky on media coverage of the Middle East, "Balance and Responsibility in the Media," appeared in the June/July *Midstream.*

ARNOLD BEICHMAN, *author of* Nine Lies About America, *covered the United Nations during the Eisenhower-Dulles years. He is a visiting scholar at the Hoover Institution.*

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financial facets of international relations and a particular attentiveness to what he thought were the economic imperatives of American foreign policy." In fact, Dulles's "economic preoccupations were often a dominant and initiating force in his world view and thought." Pruessen sees in Dulles a man who could persuade himself that his economic pragmatism and his idealism were interchangeable, in a sort of early version of what's-good-for-General Motors-is-good-for-the-world.

Pruessen finds two other tendencies in Dulles's character and beliefs which, in essence, were designed "to serve American interests." First, Dulles added to his views "a heavy dollop of religiosity" (meaning that his religious belief was excessive or affected). Second, Dulles believed that America "had a unique role to play in the 20th-century world," namely, to impose on others its ideas of "how to create a better world order."

All these elements, which account for Dulles's world view, also went into his strong anti-Communism. The only problem for the biographer is to determine the nature and extent of that anti-Communism. For Pruessen, that means having to decide *when* the Dulles whose "strident cold warrior views were still very immature in mid-1945" became the Dulles whose anti-Soviet views had been "hone[d] . . . to their notorious sharpness."

Stripped of its underlying animus, this question may not be without a certain historical interest. But in this book it is hopelessly entangled with Pruessen's abiding assumption that anti-Communism of whatever intensity is a basically irrational or—to use one of his favorite words—"simplistic" response to reality. With such a position it would be pointless to argue over details of when and how.

THE JOKE in all this—which may have to wait upon Pruessen's second volume to be fully appreciated—is that despite Dulles's "simplistic assumptions" about the USSR; despite the 1952 GOP campaign slogan promising a "rollback" of Soviet Communist expansionism; and despite Dulles's later reputation for "brinkmanship," when it came

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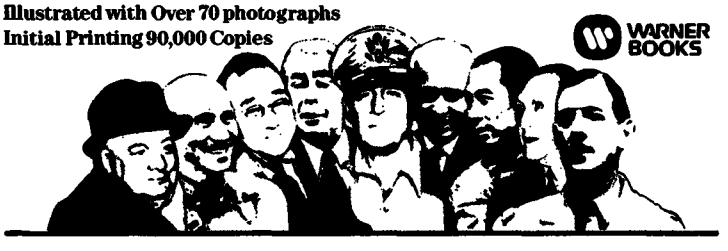

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right down to it his behavior toward the Soviet Union while he was actually in office might have pleased even the most ardent revisionist. Dulles actively discouraged any comment by the State Department about the East German uprisings in June 1953. During the 1956 Hungarian revolution, the State Department's passivity extended even to a refusal to have anything to do with Anna Kethly, a Social Democrat and the only Hungarian cabinet minister during the short-lived Imre Nagy interregnum who managed to escape to America.

Indeed, long before he became Secretary of State, Dulles had a peculiarly ambiguous attitude toward the Soviet Union—as did, in fact, Eisenhower himself. Nor was he free of certain forms of guilt about the West that we tend rather to identify with the Left. Thus in a letter of February 1944 Dulles wrote:

> "Aggression" is a subtle thing. Does it include economic aggression? Some nations are in a position by economic pressures to coerce others. We have not infrequently done this over the past. And does it include political interference in another country which brings about revolutionary change of government from which a foreign nation is a beneficiary, as, for example, Texas, Panama, and, perhaps now, Poland?

The Dulles who wrote these words was indeed a "complex amalgam"—but any sense of *this* Dulles is missing altogether from Ronald Pruessen's tendentious study.

Sephardim

SPAIN, THE JEWS, AND FRANCO. By HAIM AVNI. Translated from the Hebrew by EMANUEL SHIMONI. *Jewish Publication Society. 268 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by MARK FALCOFF

IN 1492, after centuries of coexistence with their Christian (and Muslim) neighbors, the Jews of Spain were ordered to embrace Catholicism or quit the country altogether. Some did accept this fiat and abandon (insofar as possible) their distinctively Jewish identity. Others chose to practice one faith in public, another in private. Still others—uncounted thousands—dispersed to Portugal, England, Holland, North Africa, Greece, and the Balkans, a tragic remnant of Spain in its most brilliant age. Although several times during the 19th and 20th centuries the winds of revolutionary change were to waft across the peninsula from Northern Europe, and although Spain itself enjoyed three liberal governments during those years, including a putatively "leftist" Second Republic (1931-39), the Edict of Expulsion which formally forbade the presence of a Jewish community in Spain was not lifted until December 1968—and then by General Francisco Franco.

THAT this historic reversal of a four-hundred-year policy should have been accomplished by a quondam ally of Hitler rather than by some more fitting figure in the Spanish liberal pantheon forms a sort of ironic centerpiece to this book. Its fundamental purpose, as the author explains in the introduction, is to ascertain the truth of the claim, repeatedly made by the Franco regime, that it contributed significantly to the rescue of European Jewry during the Holocaust. According to one such assertion, Madrid's aid was "extended not only to the Spanish Jews throughout the [European] continent, but also, whenever the opportunity presented itself, to all Jews irrespective of their nationality and place of residence."

Franco—protector of the Jews? An unlikely possibility, to say the very least. And yet what if there were some truth to the claim? What would it imply for both Spanish and Jewish history? In order to determine the facts, Avni found himself forced to step back and examine a host of other issues—Spanish attitudes toward Jews in the modern period; the Franco regime's relations with the Axis, and later with the Allies; the role of Spanish diplomacy during World War II, particularly in Eastern Europe and the Balkans; even the politics of Jewish relief agencies during this fateful period. Thus, in over two hundred densely packed pages, the author manages to cover a great deal of ground, and to open up several new areas for further inquiry.

AVNI begins by discussing the peculiar nature of Spanish anti-Semitism, and the ambivalent attitudes which Spain's intellectual community has long harbored toward its own (partly Jewish) past. The dominant theme is of course the consubstantiality of Spanish nationality and Catholicism, but since the late 19th century that theme has been periodically challenged by a lesser yet persistent counterpoint, which has called for the incorporation of the Sephardic, or Spanish-Jewish, community into the national family. For some, this has represented nothing more than the rectification of a vast historic injustice; for others, it has been part of a larger agenda, to project Spanish cultural influence into areas where the major second language has been French; for still others, it has constituted part of a scheme to coax supposed Jewish financial acumen into the service of Spanish economic development.

Whatever the actual motives of this "philo-Semitism," it has had to contend with very much stronger sentiments opposed to a pluralistic definition of the Spanish nationality. Hence, its accomplishments have been slow and painful. For example, it was not until 1924 that the monarch ordered his diplomatic agents abroad to proffer their protection to "people of Spanish origin." Although the Republican constitution of 1931 redefined citizenship in such a way as to make it possible for Jews to obtain it within the country itself, a law to promulgate "procedures that will facilitate persons of Spanish origin living abroad to acquire Spanish citizenship" was never actually passed.

It was during the 30's that Sephardic communities in Eastern Europe, North Africa, and the Balkans flocked to consulates and high commissions to avail themselves of a diplomatic status which, as events were to show, was actually vague and dangerously undefined. Moreover, in a fashion altogether typical of the anomalous organization of

MARK FALCOFF *is resident fellow at the Center for Hemispheric Studies, American Enterprise Institute.*

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the Second Republic, several thousand Jews managed to enter the country and settle there, largely from Sephardic communities and also, after 1933, from Germany as well; in spite of a generally benevolent political environment, these people, as Avni puts it, remained "in legal limbo."

THE victory of the Nationalists in the Civil War in 1939 brought an end to the hesitating steps toward emancipation taken under the Republic. At the same time, the status of Jews already in Spain and those claiming kinship to it in other countries was almost immediately affected by the outbreak of World War II. Here, Avni emphasizes, it is only possible to understand Franco's "Jewish policy" in terms of his other concerns. From 1939 on the dictator's principal goal was to keep his country—exhausted from its own civil conflict—out of the war. This limited the influence which Nazi Germany was able to exercise over the regime; and as the fortunes of war shifted, it also dictated a more pragmatic neutrality increasingly tilted toward the Allies.

At this point the policies of Great Britain and the United States became at least as important to the fate of the Jews as those of Franco himself; that is, Spain's Jewish policy became increasingly dependent upon the State Department, the Foreign Office, and the ability of Jewish relief organizations to influence both. Avni confirms what is already known from the accumulating literature on the diplomatic dimensions of the Holocaust: the agencies themselves were weak, underfinanced, and divided, and their leverage with Allied governments was far from overwhelming. To this he adds a new, but not wholly unexpected, twist: in Spain itself the relief agencies had to contend with U.S. Ambassador Carlton Hayes, who regarded their concerns as fundamentally disruptive of the cordial relationship he was determined to pursue with Franco. To summarize a very complex issue in a few words: the Allies did favorably influence Spain's refugee policies, but far less than they could have done.

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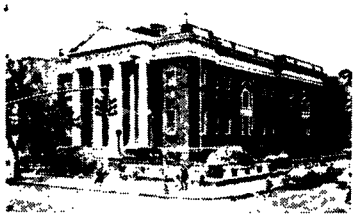

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for Spanish diplomatic initiative in areas conquered or occupied by Axis forces. At one point this included a very considerable area, stretching from Vichy France to Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and North Africa. How seriously did Spain take its obligation to "persons of Spanish origin living abroad" or its claimed solicitude for "Jews irrespective of their nationality"? The answer to that question must be recited in parts: (1) As far as *temporary* refuge is concerned, Spain did not discriminate against Jews, legally or otherwise. In the first year of the war, upward of 30,000 refugees were able to survive by negotiating transit through Spain to other countries. (2) Long-range refuge in Spain was available to many fewer; at no time did it ever exceed 2,000. (3) With the single exception of Hungary, protection of "persons of Spanish origin" covered only Sephardim, and not even all of these—for, as Avni found, "in the only instance where French Séphardic Jews asked to be included among those enjoying Spain's protection, their request was denied." And, he adds, "even the defense of its nationals was half-hearted during the first part of the war; Spain never unequivocally demanded that they be exempted from Nazi decrees." (4) During the second half of the war, Spain acted to save 11,535 Jews, whom Avni divides thus: about 7,500 refugees reached its border under all the national programs; 3,235 enjoyed various forms of diplomatic protection; another 800 Spanish nationals were saved through repatriation. But—and this is the point—"these numbers are to be regarded as maximum estimates only and . . . at least the last mentioned was far below Spain's full potential for the rescue of Jews."

The figures themselves tell only part of the story. For behind them lay not one but really three different policies, sometimes pursued simultaneously, at other times *ad seriatim*. One was to ignore altogether the commitment made to Sephardim under previous Spanish governments, ostensibly in the interests of good relations with the Axis, but in reality thanks to a deep ideological anti-Semitism which pervaded the Foreign Ministry until Ramón Serrano Suñer was replaced as its head by López Jordana in 1942. The second was to apply the criterion of diplomatic protection very selectively, with a view to rescuing Jews who could be expected to use Spain merely as a stopping-off point to other destinations. (Avni quotes López Jordana as hoping these unfortunates would pass through the country "leaving no trace, as light passes through glass.") The third was to live up to the best traditions of Spanish humanitarianism—which was fitfully but at times heroically pursued by diplomats on the scene, particularly in Paris, Athens, Budapest, Bucharest, and Sofia. It is to these professional foreign-service officers—whom Avni identifies for the first time—that Spain owes what honor it can salvage from the moral debris of World War II.

Ironically, Spain's very diplomatic and ideological proximity to Nazi Germany in the early part of the war was a double-edged sword. As Avni observes, it may well be that "if Spain's status during [these years] had been different, this rescue might never have taken place." Conversely, since there is a nagging congruence between Spanish refugee policy and the course of Allied fortunes, one can only regret that in the second half of the war pressures from that quarter were so much weaker than they could have been.

Perhaps the best thing that can be said for the Franco regime is that it acted somewhat more generously than one might have had the right to expect—the right, that is, given the entire course of Spanish and Hispano-Jewish history. In any case, Spain's record—however dismal—can easily withstand comparison with that of other Catholic countries which fell within the purview of Nazi influence: Hungary, Rumania, even (in spite of persistent Resistance legends) Vichy France.

A FINAL chapter ("In the Post-Holocaust Generation") brings the story up to date. After World War II, economic development, tourism, and a military alliance with the United States introduced new and profoundly unsettling influences into Spanish society. These, combined with a lingering desire to be accepted as an equal by the European

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community, were more than anything else responsible for Franco's decision to lift the Edict of Expulsion. Ten years later, a new Spanish constitution finally established the basis for the full constitutional emancipation of Spanish Jews. Yet the same charter still left open the possibility of preferential treament for the Roman Catholic Church, and beneath the harmonies of parliamentary democracy one could easily discern some distinctly discordant notes. In Spain, as elsewhere, the fate of Jewry is inextricably tied up with that of liberal democracy. Thus the drama of two ancient peoples enters a new and critical phase.

Defending the Guilty

THE BEST DEFENSE. By ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ. *Random House. 425 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR.

FOR YEARS I vaguely disapproved of Alan Dershowitz, although I was hardly acquainted with him. He seemed to be always in the newspapers and on radio and TV, defending objectionable radicals. He wrote rhapsodical reviews of left-wing tracts that I had found irrational and dishonest. In short, I thought of Dershowitz, who is a professor of law at Harvard, as a sort of academic William Kunstler.

The Best Defense has changed my mind. Dershowitz is no mere left-wing ideologue (though he has a left-wing ideologue's belief that the brave and honorable Jim, in *Huckleberry Finn*, is an "offensive racial stereotype"), and he does not resemble William Kunstler. He also seems a very able trial lawyer—which is more than can be said for most professors of criminal law or, indeed, of any other kind of law. He is probably a better practitioner than legal theorist, but Harvard (like Yale) has too few of the former and a surfeit of the latter. I have heard, and see no reason to doubt, that he is an excellent and popular teacher.

The book is not (nor is it intended to be) a piece of heavyweight legal scholarship, although there are many shrewd and generally sound observations about criminal justice, particularly the role of defense counsel. *The Best Defense* is a good example of the sort of book of reminiscences produced by successful trial lawyers like Louis Nizer. The very first chapter, "The Boro Park Connection," exemplifies its virtues.

The case started with a peculiarly vicious bombing of the office of Sol Hurok, an impresario who had incurred the wrath of Meir Kahane's Jewish Defense League by importing such Soviet artists as the Bolshoi ballet. Hurok, an old man, was almost killed, and a twenty-seven-year-old girl was actually killed. Three members of the JDL were indicted—all of them residents of Brooklyn's Boro Park, a hardworking and law-abiding Jewish neighborhood where Dershowitz himself had grown up. The community was naturally shocked and outraged: the president of Boro Park's board of rabbis prayed at the funeral that "there were no Jews involved. . . . This is not our way."

Dershowitz was asked to represent one of the defendants, Sheldon Seigel, who had been an acquaintance of his (though not a friend) in Boro Park. Since he could not easily handle a trial in New York while teaching his classes in Cambridge, and since he had no use for the JDL, he undertook only to find a New York lawyer and to consult with that lawyer on any constitutional issues that might arise. But he soon discovered that all of the usual radical lawyers, who gladly represented Black Panthers, Weathermen, and the like, had some more or less plausible reason for refusing to defend right-wing terrorists. (Dershowitz does not name names, but anyone familiar with that section of the bar can make some educated guesses.) So our hero—for Dershowitz, like all good criminal lawyers, is not one to underrate his own achievements—agreed to assume the defense, not only out of a "commitment to civil liberties" but also from "religious loyalty [and] regional parochialism."

He succeeded brilliantly. By ingenious reasoning he deduced that his client was a police informer. Confronted with this fact, the client admitted that he had been persuad-

JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR. *is Richard Ely Professor of Law at the Yale Law School.*

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ed to give evidence against his co-defendants by threats (including threats of being murdered by the cops) and promises; he had thoughtfully taped (with a concealed recorder) his conversations with the detective in charge of the case. By a series of intricate procedural maneuvers, including a highly unusual rejection of the district attorney's promise of immunity, accompanied by a motion that his client be tried for murder, Dershowitz managed not only to keep Seigel off the stand as a prosecution witness but to prevent his prosecution for *any* of the crimes of which the police knew him to be guilty. Without his testimony the court had to dismiss the charges against the other two bombers.

As Dershowitz recognizes, the exoneration of terrorists who were fairly clearly responsible for the murder of an innocent girl was not an occasion for celebration. Injustice had been done, and Dershowitz had played a role in it. About the only bright spot he can see is that the revulsion caused by the bombing led to a dramatic decline in support for the JDL among American Jews.

On the other side, Dershowitz also defended H. Bruce Franklin, a tenured professor of English literature at Stanford and one of the last surviving specimens of the American Stalinist (also, of course, a Maoist). This was not in a criminal proceeding but before a faculty board considering whether Franklin ought to be fired. The board found in essence that Franklin had "incited" students and others to violence and recommended his immediate sacking, advice which the president and the trustees were glad to follow. Dershowitz, although he shared the view of Franklin prevalent among Stanford's faculty, nevertheless "criticized the decision for failing to draw the critical distinction between 'advocacy,' which is protected under the First Amendment, and 'incitement,' which may not be."

I disagree. The fact is that Franklin did urge the students to wage a "people's war" against Stanford, to disrupt classes and lectures by instructors whose ideas were not (as the old Puritans put it) "savory," and to close down university facilities, such as the Computation Center, which were involved in research that might have some relation to the military. Violence duly occurred, and reasonable men could find, as the committee did, that the violence was caused at least in part by Franklin's inflammatory speeches.

Nor do I agree with Dershowitz that firing Franklin was wrong for the same reasons that Stanford was wrong in refusing to allow William Shockley to offer graduate students an elective course on "Dysgenics: New Research Methodology on Human Behavorial Genetics and Racial Differences." There is no close resemblance between the two cases. For one thing, Shockley, however disputed his theories may be, is not a mere slogan-shouter like Franklin, but a serious researcher. (I question Dershowitz's assertion, which he does not support with examples, that Shockley's "obnoxious conclusions were greeted with derision and refutation by most respected geneticists." Few geneticists have supported those conclusions, but equally few have derided and refuted them. Many agree with Shockley's basic premise that heredity is at least as important as environment in determining individual intelligence.) More to the point, Shockley has never advocated violence, and has been the cause of it only in the sense that radicals have frequently resorted to violence to prevent his exercise of his First Amendment rights.

There are other intriguing cases here, including those of Bernard Bergman, the nursing-home operator known as "the meanest man in New York," and Frank Snepp, the former CIA agent who broke his promise not to publish accounts of CIA operations without the agency's consent. I do not find either man as sympathetic as Dershowitz does. The media and assorted politicians undoubtedly painted Bergman much blacker than he was—there was no evidence that he was responsible for mistreatment and neglect of elderly patients in his nursing homes—but he was not lily-white. As for Snepp, he is a man who broke his word and made money by doing so. The government did not prefer criminal charges against him or seek to suppress his book: it sued him for breach of contract and recovered as damages his royalties on the book. I am less outraged than Dershowitz.

The basic dilemma presented by *The Best Defense* is the propriety of a lawyer's using every legal device he can think of to get off a man whom he knows to be guilty—and Dershowitz states over and over what every criminal lawyer knows: "Almost all criminal defendants are, in fact, guilty." There are a number of answers to the problem. One, best stated by Samuel Johnson, is that it is not for the lawyer, but for the judge and jury, to decide whether the defendant is guilty and, if he is, what his punishment should be. Another, which Dershowitz does not state plainly but which clearly worked on him in several of the cases he describes, is that the first person a good advocate convinces is himself, and what he convinces himself of is that his client may be a criminal but that he is not guilty of the crime with which he is charged, or at least that he is being treated unfairly.

But the best answer to the ethical problem of defending the guilty is the one Dershowitz finally offers: "Consider the alternative." If the law says that the "guilty" are not entitled to a defense, and the determination of guilt is made by the government, then we have Soviet justice. Dershowitz has seen too much of that (he has been active in the Soviet Jewry Legal Defense Project) to think that the unjust acquittal of some criminals is too high a price to pay to avoid Communist justice. That still leaves us with the rather questionable spectacle of a professor of law bragging about his successes in frustrating justice, but for the sake of the principle we can live with that too.

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A Short Novel

The Rebbetzin

Chaim Grade

CHAIM GRADE *(1910-1982) was one of the most important Yiddish writers of our time. A poet as well as a novelist, Grade specialized in exploring the inner life of East European Jewry between the two world wars—a period when such modernizing forces as secularism, socialism, and Zionism were in active and often ugly conflict with one another and with traditional religious beliefs and practices. No other writer rendered that world and its conflicts more vividly or with more intimate authority than Grade did in works like "My War with Hersh Rasseyner"* (COMMENTARY, *November 1953), his massive novel,* The Yeshiva *(published in translation by Bobbs-Merrill in hard cover and Menorah Publishing Co. in paperback), and the shorter classic we present here.*

Set in Lithuania in the late 1920's or early 30's, and translated from the Yiddish by Harold Rabinowitz and Inna Hecker Grade, "The Rebbetzin" will be included in a forthcoming volume of three novellas by Grade to be published next month by Knopf under the title Rabbis and Wives. *Its appearance here, for the first time in English, is made possible by the Harry Elson Commentary Fund. Translation copyright © 1982 by the Estate of Chaim Grade. Originally published in* Di Kloyz Un Di Gas: Dertseylungen, *copyright © 1974 by Chaim Grade.*

1.

THE GRAIPEWO RAV* and his wife had reached their later years. Their children were all married and lived in Horadna. The Rav, Rabbi Uri-Zvi Ha-Kohen Koenigsberg, was a huge, fleshy man, tall and wide, with wavy sidelocks flowing into a snow-white beard and large, innocent light-blue eyes. Though widely respected as a scholar and preacher, Rabbi Koenigsberg had never sought a more prestigious pulpit. He remained in Graipewo, never arguing with his congregants or ruling them with an iron hand—and never flattering the wealthier of them either. It was his wish to avoid contention at all cost.

When litigants came before him for a ruling, he was so persistent in urging them to settle the dispute themselves that only rarely did he have to render a verdict. When the townspeople urged him to rebuke the young men who were straying from the right path, he would never publicly chastise the impudent youths in his sermons. Instead, he would come down where they congregated and talk to them behind the bimah; he would even seek them out in the marketplace. And there was a great deal to reproach these young men for: much desecration of the Sabbath, and cavorting with girls by the river—and just plain recklessness. But the Rav would simply ask them: "How long is one young?"—and continue plaintively, "You're all going to be older someday. And you'll be ashamed all your life for what you are doing now. Is this proper for children of such nice homes as yours?" He would say this with such anguish and sincerity that even the most brazen youths would not dare to answer back.

With the same solemnity and care with which he chanted the morning prayers, he conducted classes in Mishnah every morning after services. And so clear and simple were his explanations that even a child could understand. With that same patience did he eat, study, write out his Talmudic insights, and prepare his sermons. And when he grew tired, he would stroll down the path behind his house. Calmly, with his hands clasped behind him, he would walk, half murmuring, half chanting to himself a song of praise to God for such a beautiful day.

* See Glossary, page 127, for definition of this and other Hebrew and Yiddish terms.

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If he met anyone on the way, he would nod amiably without waiting to be greeted first, and then continue his brisk stroll to a pleasant, barely audible melody. But should a man approach him looking worried and say, "Rabbi, I'd like to ask you for some advice," his entire demeanor would express concern and he'd listen to this man's problem right there on the road. He would then take the troubled man into his home and, in private, continue to listen until the man had finished pouring out his heart and could leave consoled.

Even the more contentious among his congregants respected and admired the Rav's humility. Once the president of the congregation remarked: "The Rav, may he live and be well, is beloved and esteemed by all of us, and Graipewo would not think for a moment of his leaving. But we wonder, why is it that he has never sought a larger congregation, as so many of his colleagues have done?"

"I have nothing against Graipewo," he answered. "Except perhaps this: when our children were small, my rebbetzin and I worried about their education. But now that our children are grown and have, thank God, married well, we are only two people. So do we really need a larger house or a city with half-a-dozen synagogues? We can only sleep in one room at a time and pray in one synagogue."

This reply endeared the Rav to the townspeople even more. Even so, the Jews of Graipewo knew that he was concealing from them the persistent urging of his wife that he seek a new pulpit.

The Rebbetzin Perele was the exact opposite of her husband in appearance as well as character: a slight woman with narrow shoulders and thin arms, with sharp, searching eyes and a tall rabbinic forehead inherited from her father, the great sage Rabbi Osherel Broido, the Gaon of Staropol. Perele suffered from headaches, extreme nervousness, and indigestion, and was given to fits of moodiness. She had a medicine chest bursting with bottles, and spent days on end lying on the sofa with a wet cloth on her forehead. She would suck valerian-soaked sugar cubes and take teaspoon after teaspoon of her medicines. The women of the town always insisted that there was nothing wrong with her. "Why, she's as healthy as a hard, bitter radish," they declared. "All these illnesses she imagines she has, come from her wretched personality." It was a common saying among the people of Graipewo that, as nice as the Rav was, that's how nasty was his rebbetzin.

Not that Perele minded what the townspeople said about her. She never befriended any of them anyway: if you let the ignorant get too close, they'll jump all over you. And she would tell her husband that when he spent hours listening to someone's problems, that person looked upon the Rav as a tzaddik, a saint, while he was unburdening himself. But if that same man should see him lavishing such attention on someone else, that first ignoramus would think, "What a fool the Rav is!"

In her father's house back in Staropol, and later in her own home, Perele had heard many snatches of Talmudic lore, which she could cite with fluency and ease. Yet she did not attend services, except on an occasional Sabbath when the New Moon was blessed, or on a holiday. No one could have accused the Graipewo Rebbetzin of being too religious. But that didn't stop her from complaining to her husband because they didn't fear him as if he were a hetman with a mace.

No woman in town had as many dresses, coats, or fancy hats as Perele. But her clothes were all made in the old classic style; she even ordered that her new dresses be made in that old-fashioned way. And she had a saying for this, too: "The difference between a sacred book and one of your little secular books is that one reads an ordinary book and then throws it away, but a sacred book one kisses after reading and places it on the shelf to come back to again and again throughout one's life. It's exactly the same, if you'll forgive the comparison, with clothes. The old styles you can wear and wear, but today's styles you wear just today and throw out tomorrow."

Emissaries from distant yeshivahs and itinerant maggidim who spent the Sabbath with the Rav could not praise the rebbetzin enough. Although it is not altogether proper for a pious scholar to talk about another man's wife, these guests could not help making an exception in this case, declaring to the men of Graipewo that their rebbetzin was as keen as Bruriah, the wife of the Talmudic sage Rabbi Meir. When the men would go home and tell this to their wives, the women would sneer, "That show-off! She only wants to show that she's smarter than her husband and that she's the real boss in that house."

EVEN in the early days of their marriage the rebbetzin had nagged her husband to seek a new position. Reb Uri-Zvi had an answer ready for her. "In the first place," he would say, "how can you be sure that another town will be any better than Graipewo? In the second place, it rarely happens that a rabbi assumes a new position without causing a storm of controversy. So what's the use of moving?" Fed up as Perele was with the mud of Graipewo, she had had to admit that her husband was not entirely wrong. But now that the children were married and living in Horadna, she pestered him incessantly about moving there.

Reb Uri-Zvi would shrug. "There's already a Chief Rabbi in Horadna, with a whole Rabbinical Court."

"So who says you have to be a Rav all your life? We could just move there and live with the children."

This Reb Uri-Zvi did not want to hear, and Perele understood why even better than her husband: as long as parents have their health and are able to get along on their own, they should not live

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with their children. So she would drop this kind of talk as suddenly as she had begun.

The Graipewo Rebbetzin was, however, quite well aware that it was not just to be near the children that she wanted to move to Horadna. There was another reason, a very secret one, and no one, thank God, not even her husband, knew the secret; she was ashamed to admit it even to herself. But to this day she often thought of the Rav of Horadna, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Ha-Levi Eisenstadt, to whom she had once been engaged—and against whom she still measured her husband, Rabbi Koenigsberg.

Perele was the only child of the Staropol Rav, Rabbi Osherel Broido, a small man with a wizened, parchment-like face and a thin, wispy gray beard. He wore a short fur overcoat in summer and winter alike, for he was constantly cold. The Jews of Staropol were aware that their Rav was considered a Gaon, a giant among scholars. Prominent rabbis, awesome men with great white beards—they looked like giant, snow-covered oaks—traveled from afar to Staropol just to spend a Sabbath with the Rav and discuss the Talmud with him.

Reb Osherel never talked about the goings-on in the town and never interested himself in communal matters. "A rabbi," he would say, "must sit and study. There is no lack of those who can attend to the affairs of the community, but there is a lack of scholars." The people listened quietly, but were very much annoyed by this attitude. They could only console themselves with the recognition that their Rav was indeed a renowned scholar and that he really did study Talmud day and night.

The Talmud and his daughter—these were Reb Osherel's only consolations after his wife passed away. He had his daughter tutored in Hebrew, Russian, and even German literature, although her teachers had to come to the Rav's house so he could be sure that his daughter was not, along with the secular subjects, being taught anything heretical. Though short and unattractive, Perele, even as a child, was thought to be very bright and very learned.

The groom chosen for her was the renowned young scholar Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt—the "Zhetler Prodigy," as he was called in his youth. The young man was to study with his father-in-law, the Gaon of Staropol, after the wedding, and in time assume the position of Rav of Staropol.

The groom was even a houseguest in the bride's home several times. Shortly before the wedding day, however, he unexpectedly returned the engagement agreement and all the presents he had received. He also sent a letter in which he described the leaders of the community as telling him plainly that they would not accept him as the new Rav of Staropol merely because he was the present Rav's son-in-law. Reb Osherel was, after all, Reb Osherel. They had cherished him all these years, they had told him, but the new Rav would have to be a good speaker and a worldly person as well; and as far as rabbinic learning was concerned, it would be no calamity if he was not an earthshaking genius. "I, however," wrote the young man, "do not know Russian or Polish, certainly not enough to talk to government officials. And I am even less inclined to public speaking, so that this arrangement would not seem to be entered into in good faith on either side." It was thus that the groom explained to the old Rav his withdrawal from the marriage. But to his own family he told the truth: he did not want to marry Perele because he felt she was a shrew.

Perele understood this. The young scholar had often told her, "You may be intelligent, but you're not good-natured." At first he had said this in jest, but afterward she understood that her groom's doubts about her were no laughing matter.

"Do you know why the Zhetler Prodigy doesn't want me?" she said to her father, her lips taut. "Staropol is too small a town for him . . . and I'm too small a bride for him. He wants a big city and a big bride. A big, fat cow—a benign fool—is what he wants. But there is no such thing as a good-natured fool. A fool is a spiritual cripple," she said with stern Talmudic resolve, "and a cripple cannot be good-natured."

This was the tirade she would sing in her father's ears. The old sage would listen with troubled, watery eyes and then bury his head once again in his sacred volumes, thinking that when it came to judging his daughter's character, the Zhetler Prodigy did not err.

2.

Perele was engaged a second time, to a student from Kaidan, Uri-Zvi Koenigsberg, a strong and handsome young man with bright eyes that shone from a clear face, and a tranquil manner. When she compared him to her first betrothed, she thought she really ought to be thankful that the first one had changed his mind—he, after all, was shorter and thinner, with a nose as long and as bent as a ram's horn, and he spoke with a cloying, nasal twang. His only striking features were the clever, laughing eyes that sparkled like the silver brocade on a prayer shawl. Upon first meeting Perele, the Zhetler Prodigy had apologized for his lisp, telling her that although Moses had been a stammerer, he nevertheless had conquered the world with his teachings. But the young man from Kaidan, besides being a scholar, could speak beautifully. The bride, trembling in fear lest this splendid groom be snatched from her, hurried the wedding plans along. After living for a few years in the house of his father-in-law, immersed in study, Reb Uri-Zvi became the Rav of Graipewo—not wanting to force himself on Staropol merely because he was the Rav's son-in-law, he assumed this smaller pulpit. And so, Perele became the Rebbetzin of Graipewo, and the mother of a girl and two boys.

From time to time, news of her first betrothed would reach her: Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisen-

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stadt had married the Horadna Rav's daughter, and soon attained his own eminence. He was not awarded any appointments, neither did he pursue any high position; yet he became head of the Rabbinical Court of Horadna during his father-in-law's lifetime. In time, word reached Perele that Reb Moshe-Mordecai was deemed the outstanding scholar of the day; his responsa were sought by Jewish communities all over the world. He was invited to become the Chief Rabbi of Bialystok, even of Lodz. But the Jews of Horadna were ever watchful against any attempt to rob them of their jewel. When the Graipewo Rebbetzin heard such reports, her throat became parched. She could remember how young Moshe-Mordecai of Zhetler stood and how he walked, as clearly as if he were still her betrothed. His every movement and gesture spoke of brilliance; in his every answer there flashed the unmistakable mark of genius.

The more the world praised the Horadna Rav, the greater were the failings Perele found in her husband. To begin with, he was a simpleton—in every dispute that was brought before him, both sides were right. He was never firm in his opinions, so naturally his congregants had no cause to fear him. His sermons were adequate for a small town, but he was afraid to speak publicly in the large cities or to aspire to a pulpit there. Yet what a man truly knows, she declared, he is not afraid to display anywhere.

In matters of learning, needless to say, her husband could not compare to her father, of blessed memory. Perele found fault even with her husband's appearance and mannerisms: a rabbi should not be so tall and husky. How many times had she not pleaded with him to comb down his sidelocks, yet they were always curled up like a goat's. When he drank tea, he sweated and panted noisily, blowing in and out through thick, pursed lips as if he had burned himself.

Still, it was really only when her ears rang with praises of the Horadna Rav that Perele was disposed to deprecate her husband. On any ordinary day Reb Uri-Zvi was a crown on her head. She basked in his kindly gaze and fretted about his health. And yet, if some time passed without a word of the Horadna Rav, she felt an emptiness. This was not a matter she wished to discuss with her husband, and certainly not with the women of the town—women can have long memories, and she feared that they would recall how the Horadna Rav had once been her intended, but had rejected her. And Perele did not, in any case, care to waste her time with the town women. But when a rabbi was a guest in her home and her husband had not yet returned from the synagogue, Perele would remark casually, "We hear that the Horadna Rav is the outstanding rabbinical authority today. Tell me, is he really as great as they say? In what does his greatness lie?"

"A genius!" the guest would declare ecstatically, stroking his beard for emphasis. "A Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt appears only once in a generation."

"And clever, too? Everyone says that he's extremely clever," the rebbetzin would add sadly, as she went back to the kitchen to get another glass of tea for her guest. Half the water in the kettle would already have boiled out, yet Perele stood lost in thought, staring blankly at the flame, a cold gleam in her wide eyes.

The Graipewo Rav's daughter, eldest of his three children, married into a merchant family of Horadna, which invited the rabbis of the town to the wedding—and foremost among them, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. Even before she could see his face, Perele recognized his gait—those same brisk movements as of old. But when she saw his face, she could hardly believe her eyes: she was certain that Reb Moshe-Mordecai was no more than fifty, yet he looked much older, with stooped shoulders and a great gray beard. After the ceremony the Graipewo Rebbetzin sat next to her daughter at the women's table and observed the Horadna Rav's friendliness toward her husband at the men's table.

Reb Moshe-Mordecai stayed for a short time and then rose to leave, and Perele watched as all the rabbis and important guests rose to accompany him to the door. He was evidently in a jocular and convivial mood, because those around him were smiling and laughing. And yet, although the Rav was to all appearances at ease and did not look in her direction, it seemed to Perele that her presence in that great, crowded wedding hall had made him uneasy and that that was why he was so quick to leave.

The Graipewo Rav's two sons, both yeshivah students at that time, later married into Horadna families as well, with their mother's eager encouragement. Of all the matches proposed for her sons, Perele approved only of the girls of Horadna. In the frequent and long arguments between husband and wife, the ordinarily patient and soft-spoken Reb Uri-Zvi lost his temper and shouted, "What is this infatuation you have with Horadna?" Perele would reply very calmly that if he had greater understanding, he would not be so perplexed. Since their daughter lived in Horadna, it was only logical that their sons should settle there. First, the children would not feel like strangers if all of them were living in the same city. Second, their parents would not have to travel to three different cities to visit them. Besides, the girls of Horadna were all of fine families. And since the sons had been trained since childhood to obey their mother, they each took a Horadna bride.

PERELE HAD heard that Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt's wife became pregnant a year after they were married and that she miscarried. She became very ill after that, and the doctors advised her not to have any children. But she did not listen to them, again became pregnant, and gave birth to a girl. Perele heard that the only daughter of the Horadna Rebbetzin had a

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weak heart and suffered from asthma. She was pale and fretful, and often cried for days at a time. Ashamed of her sickly, wan appearance, she did not attend the girls' school and had no friends. She was continually sipping something from a bottle through a glass straw to ease her breathing. Her father would take her for walks or to the doctors, and her mother constantly gave charity in her behalf. Whenever her mother met a pious Jew, she would ask him for a blessing for her one and only child. Sometimes when the Graipewo Rebbetzin heard all this, she would sigh deeply, first in sympathy and then with relief that her children were, thank God, healthy. After a while the young girl's health improved and it was reported that her parents were interested in arranging a marriage.

In winter Graipewo sank in a sea of snow that lapped onto the sealed double windows of the houses. The gray daylight and the early nightfall cast a lethargy over the town, a deep gloom. After these long nights the people of Graipewo would arise with cold aches in their bones, as if they had been sleeping all night in a swamp. The only bright and cheerful times of the week were Friday night, with the golden flames of Sabbath candles in the houses, and the Sabbath day in the beth midrash—the cantor's melodies in the morning services, the rabbi's sermon in the afternoon after services, and the chanting of Psalms by the congregation in the dim twilight. But then, on the Friday before Hanukkah, one man disturbed the serenity of the Sabbath.

He had spent the week in Horadna and returned to Graipewo in time for the Friday morning services. As he removed his hood and his snow-covered coat, he announced the tragic news that the Horadna Rav's daughter had suddenly died—there had not been time even to call a doctor. The man told how all Horadna had grieved at the funeral, looking pityingly on the broken and weeping father, and the mother standing beside him frozen as a stone. For an entire week the town had been shrouded in mourning and darkness, as if the sun had been eclipsed.

The men in the Graipewo synagogue that morning were stunned by this news. Although they murmured, "Blessed is the Righteous Judge," they gazed questioningly at the Holy Ark all during the service. Why had such sorrow been meted out to the Gaon, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt? The worshippers hurried home afterward and told their wives of the tragedy; the women wrung their hands and carried the dark tidings into the marketplace. So that by the time Reb Uri-Zvi came home from the synagogue his wife knew everything.

Perele's face was painfully drawn and ashen pale, and her eyes betrayed secret, troubled thoughts. The tragedy that had befallen the Horadna Rav gave her more cause to shudder than any other woman in Graipewo. She had the eerie feeling that she and her children had been spared from her onetime fiancé's evil fate. Yet, at the same time, she seethed with anger to hear the women of the town say that this would indeed be a joyless Sabbath—they were talking as if the Rav of Horadna were also the Rav of Graipewo.

Reb Uri-Zvi, with characteristic sensitivity and delicacy, had always refrained from mentioning the Horadna Rav to his wife, not wishing to remind her of the embarrassment of her broken engagement. This time, however, he felt no need to be careful of her feelings. He sighed and moaned and wrung his hands: "Such a terrible edict from Heaven! Such a sorrow! The entire rabbinical world will be shaken!" Perele could not stand her husband's moaning, his old-womanish hand-wringing, his foolish prattling about "the entire rabbinical world" being shaken—what, nothing less than the whole rabbinical world? The rebbetzin felt a sharp pain in her chest and started coughing. She lay on the couch for a long time, her silent lips parched.

The Graipewo Rebbetzin was suffering deeply, partly out of pity for the Horadna Rav, partly from an anger that she herself did not understand. Still and all, there remained much for her to do to prepare for the Sabbath. And so, rising painfully from the couch, she turned to her husband, who was reciting the Grace after meals, and said: "Nevertheless, after services tonight tell the men, and tell them to tell their wives, that mourning is not permitted on the Sabbath, especially since they are not relatives of Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt and he isn't their Rav either."

Reb Uri-Zvi's eyes widened. Although his dear wife spoke in a dry and sober tone, she seemed to him as if possessed. And the rebbetzin, notwithstanding her concern that others avoid gloom on the Sabbath, herself spent the entire day lying on the sofa, grim and sullen. That Saturday night, when Reb Uri-Zvi returned from the synagogue, she was still lying there, and spoke to him through the darkness. Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt, she told him, had as a young man deluded himself, like every smart one who tries to be too smart. The girl he married had been sickly as a child, but this had not mattered to him. He had taken a sickly, cheerless bride because he was eager to become the Rav of Horadna.

"I feel very sorry for him," she said finally. Then, with great effort, she rose from the sofa, walked toward her husband, and stood motionless while he recited the Havdalah.

3.

For the rest of the winter, Perele relentlessly nagged her husband to move to Horadna. Reb Uri-Zvi interpreted this to mean that his wife had been terrified by the tragic death of the Horadna Rav's daughter, and that she now simply wanted to be near her own children. He tried to reassure her: "What are you worried about, silly one? Our children, thank God, are strong and healthy. A Jew must believe in God's will. The

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Talmud says that a man cannot hurt a finger in this world if it is not decreed in Heaven."

Perele replied that she had her fill of Talmudic sayings. Had he forgotten, or was he just making believe he'd forgotten, that their daughter Serel was about to become a mother again? And while Serel was giving birth, who would be taking care of her twins? Their son-in-law was a busy man.

"So you'll go there for a while, then. And when there will be a brith or a party for a baby girl, then I'll come, too," the rabbi said. He pleaded with her to let him study, prepare his sermons, and answer letters. But the rebbetzin only mocked him sardonically: "How wonderful that you'll be able to come to our grandson's brith! And just who is going to help Serel when she has a nursing baby at her breast and the twins tugging at her apron?"

The rebbetzin spoke calmly, with the dry, exact measure of a wall clock ticking loudly. The discussion did not prevent her from serving dinner, or interfere with her housework. But the Rav could not concentrate on his work and talk to her at the same time. When Perele had, for the time being, exhausted her concern for her daughter, she would start fretting about her sons. They, too, had children, thank God, and she was not being much of a grandmother to them—she saw her grandchildren once in a blue moon. She might have been proud of her sons had they not been so much like their father, a man with no ambition. Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah did not care to be rabbis, and they weren't even good businessmen. They just took things as they came and never really accomplished anything —just like their father. Now, if she were living near her children, she could prod them not to fritter away their youth. Seeking to prove that her children had inherited their weak character from their father and not from herself, she never let him forget that he had not even tried to become the Rav of Staropol, where her father had been Rav all his life and where she had been born. His reply—that he did not want to start any arguments—was really no answer. Her father, may his soul rest in peace, used to say a rabbi should not look for a fight, but he shouldn't be afraid of one either.

"And I say," shouted the Rav, "a Torah scholar should run to the ends of the earth to avoid an argument!"

He felt as if his brains were glowing in the heat of his wife's incessant complaints, like a teakettle that is left on the fire until all the water has boiled away. But to any visitor whom the rebbetzin greeted in the foyer of the Rav's house she spoke about her husband with so much respect and admiration that one would think she was his humble servant. "You would like to see the Rav? Let me see if he isn't taking a nap." Perele also made sure the visitor's business was important enough. She didn't want to hear any details or confidences and she didn't care to get involved in other people's problems, but one must understand that she could not allow the Rav to be barraged with trivialities. He mustn't be deprived of his time for study or rest. After these preliminaries she'd usher the visitor into the inner chamber and promptly leave. Reb Uri-Zvi would heave a sigh of relief at being free of his wife for a few moments. He was so upset by the way she dealt with people that he found it difficult to concentrate on his guest. Even old friends were made to feel that they were being granted a formal audience.

The Rav found a way around this predicament: he simply stayed in the synagogue more than at home. Yet, his wife warned him, it is not fitting for the Rav of a town to stay all day in the synagogue like an indigent scholar who has no home to go to. He didn't want to hear any more complaints? Very well, so be it. And Perele stopped talking to her husband, leaving all the housework undone. It seemed that she could arrange to be sick whenever she pleased. Once again she suffered from headaches and lay for days on the sofa with a wet compress on her forehead. She washed down teaspoons of medicine with sweet, lukewarm tea as she sighed and stared out the window.

OUTSIDE, even the days were darkened by the thick gray snow which fell without end, whirling and rearranging every street, every porch, step, and threshold. And if the snow abated, Perele would watch the lowering clouds and feel them closing in on her heart, nearly smothering it. She broke into stubborn fits of dry, angry, rasping coughing. Then she'd resume taking spoonful after spoonful of concoctions and spend the day in silence once again. Her silence and coughing tormented her husband more than her nagging. So he approached the sofa and begged her: if she was so lonely for the children and grandchildren, then let her go to Horadna for a few weeks. He'd manage somehow without her. She listened quietly and then turned her head toward the window, as if to reproach him for wanting her to travel in a blizzard when it would be a sin to send a dog out into the street.

Reb Uri-Zvi returned to his study and Perele looked after him as he walked away with stooped shoulders, clad in a long knitted housecoat of green wool and wearing a worn, tall black-velvet yarmulke atop unkempt white hair. It hurt her to have to torment him so, but she couldn't forgive him for getting stuck in Graipewo, in its dusty summers, its muddy autumns, and the mountainous snows of its winters. He never attended rabbinical gatherings, and he wasn't even interested in seeing the children. Perele remembered that she had to prepare supper for her husband; he must be hungry, though he wasn't saying anything. So she went into the kitchen and warmed some porridge, boiled a kettle of tea, and cooked two eggs. Afterward she went to him in the study. His head was bowed over an open book, but he wasn't reading. "Go and wash and eat," he heard her say.

Reb Uri-Zvi lifted his pleading eyes. "Perele, I

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don't understand you. I often don't know if I should take you seriously. Tell me, why should we leave a place where we're earning a dignified livelihood and move somewhere where we'll have to rely on our children for support?"

THE rebbetzin smiled like one who patronizes someone speaking nonsense. "And living in Graipewo at the whim of the congregation is more honorable than being supported by one's own children?" And she again argued, this time lovingly, sufferingly, and with a quiet insistence. Instead of having a pulpit in a town no bigger than a fig, it would be more dignified to sit in the synagogue of Horadna and study for oneself. At least, then people would say, "That man could have been the Rav of a big city!" Perele pointed to the long sheets of paper covered with an elaborately twisted script that lay in a large pile on the table. For years he had been working on his treatise, and it still wasn't finished. With no scholars in Graipewo to converse with, he often lost his enthusiasm for committing his insights and reflections to paper. In Horadna, though, there was no lack of scholars; there he'd have many with whom to discuss the intricacies of the Talmud and he'd be spurred on to complete his work and have it published.

"And as long as we're talking about this wonderful living we're supposed to be making here, tell your congregants that we can't manage on your salary anymore. The cost of everything has tripled and we're still getting the same forty-seven zlotys and fifty groschen a week."

At this, the Rav was elated. When he received a raise and his dear wife saw how he was valued by the town, she'd certainly stop nagging him to move. But when, after morning services, Rabbi Koenigsberg broached the subject of a raise with the president of the congregation, he was startled by the response: "The people feel quite to the contrary. They feel that since the Rav has successfully married off his children and now he and the rebbetzin are but two people living alone, they should be getting less than they received when they were supporting a whole family. The town treasury doesn't even have enough funds to heat the synagogue all day. The teachers in the school are getting a third of what they need to live, and the orphans are in rags and hungry."

Reb Uri-Zvi grasped anxiously at his silver beard, fearful, it seemed, lest it fall off.

"The rabbis of other towns no bigger than Graipewo are getting seventy-five or even a hundred zlotys a week. I get barely fifty. In American money that's less than ten dollars a week! And you're telling me that it's too much?"

To this the president replied, as cold and grim as the wintry day outside, that the shopkeepers of Graipewo were not making even thirty zlotys a week.

With a downcast heart and a chastened look the Rav related this conversation to his wife. To his amazement, she was not a bit perturbed. But the next day, while shopping, she was telling people that, God willing, they'd be leaving Graipewo after Passover. The Rav found out about this the following day in the synagogue when the president complained harshly: "For over twenty-five years, Rabbi, you have been our Rav. Suddenly you've decided to abandon us because you haven't gotten a raise? And you didn't even think it proper to inform the congregation of this—we had to find out from your wife in the marketplace!"

The anger Reb Uri-Zvi felt toward his wife he vented on the congregation. For all this time he had served as their Rav and never had he haggled with them about money. So if this one time he asked for a raise, was it right to answer that the shopkeepers made less? If that was the case, perhaps he really ought to consider leaving Graipewo.

At home, however, the Rav could not muster the strength to start an argument with his wife. "How could you do such a thing without telling me?" was all he could manage to say with a resigned sigh. But Perele answered him excitedly, fairly singing, as if she had become twenty years younger. "There was no doubt in my mind that they'd refuse to give you a raise. I just wanted you to see for yourself what kind of respect they have for your learning. They're ready to do anything for you—as long as it doesn't cost them an extra groschen."

A dispute over the question now festered in the community. One side argued that if the Rav had no sympathy for the townspeople's economic situation, then let him leave. The other side, the majority, felt that some settlement should be made. Finally the officers came to a decision, which they presented to the Rav one day in the synagogue. The community, they declared, simply couldn't afford to give him a raise, but they were willing to grant the rebbetzin the sole right to sell yeast, and this would bring them a sizable additional income.

Rabbi Koenigsberg couldn't tell them that his wife would never agree to this. It was perfectly true, he knew, that in years past every small-town rebbetzin had sold yeast; but Perele's face blanched at the very idea, and for a minute she looked at her husband in trembling disbelief, as if he had asked her to remove her wig and shoes and go out prancing in the snow barefoot. Her next reaction was to laugh herself to tears. Why only yeast? Rebbetzins also used to sell candles, salt, and kerosene. But her mother, the Staropol Rebbetzin, had never sold yeast, and when her mother died and she, Perele, had been left alone with her father, neither had she sold yeast. So now, after decades of being a rebbetzin, was she to become a yeast merchant? She had always kept aloof from the women of the town; now they'd become her bosses: "Rebbetzin, you're not giving me full weight," she could hear one yente saying; "Rebbetzin, you're charging too much," from another yente.

"Now you see what their respect for your learning is worth, and here you've been a friend to

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everyone and served the town like a soldier. They couldn't even show you the courtesy of coming to talk to me here in the house. They threw me this bone through you."

The Rav became even more irritated. Perele's every word stung him like a thorn. He quickly secluded himself in the study. When he returned to the dining room, the rebbetzin said not a word about the raise or about leaving. She knew that the words she had sown were warming themselves in her husband's mind under his snowy white hair and would in time yield the blossoms she wanted.

4.

As THE winter passed, the rift between the Rav and his congregation developed into a serious quarrel. To the congregants it seemed that the Rav harbored real hostility toward them, "and all because we wouldn't give him a few extra zlotys." To the Rav it seemed that the congregants were no longer interested in his sermons and weren't even greeting him with a warm "good Sabbath." "And all because I asked them for a little raise. If that's the case, then Perele is right!" So Reb Uri-Zvi told his wife to make preparations to move right after Passover.

The Rav and the congregation parted amicably, if somewhat stiffly. He had managed to put aside some money, and he owned the house in which he lived. The synagogue trustees assured him that the new Rav would have to buy the house and pay him in cash.

In his last moments in Graipewo, Reb Uri-Zvi felt a sharp pang in his heart at leaving the place where for twenty-five years he had lived in peace and with dignity. Nor did the couple find any joy upon their arrival in Horadna. Instead of welcoming them, the children reproached their mother for uprooting their father in his old age. Perele replied that when they had grandchildren of their own, they would understand a grandparent's longing to be near grandchildren. Besides, they had nothing to worry about: so far, their parents did not have to depend on them and were not going to live with them.

The two sons, Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah, both the image of their father with their curly hair and thick, full faces, were like him in character as well: calm, gentle, none too talkative, they were men who valued their peace of mind. After their marriages, they had opened a shoe store together, glad to be living in Horadna, far from their mother's meddling. They were not at all pleased about her arrival in town, knowing as they did that she would once again try to run their lives as she had right up to their wedding days. They realized all too well that she was fed up with being the rebbetzin in a small town. Was she going to be satisfied, then, with being just her grandchildren's nanny? But the brothers did not discuss their feelings with anyone —not with their wives, not even with their sister.

The daughter, in contrast to the sons, had never listened to Perele, and when the rebbetzin wanted anything of her, she had to appeal to her husband to remind Serel of the respect due a mother. Serel was the very image of her mother in appearance, perhaps a little taller and broader; but, unlike her mother, she had particularly sought to marry a man whom she could obey. Her husband had a pock-marked face, happy eyes, broad shoulders, and large hands. His name was Ezra Edelman, though *edelman*—"gentleman"—was anything but the proper word for him. He owned a yard-goods store and conducted himself like a God-fearing, though not fanatically observant, Jew. By nature, he was too lazy for subtleties, so that when his wife asked him, "Don't you realize what my mother's purpose is in moving to Horadna?" he answered, "What are you worried about?" He knew that, whatever it was that his mother-in-law wanted, she'd get nowhere with him.

RABBI KOENIGSBERG expected they would rent a two-room dwelling and planned to give his children those volumes of his library he would not be needing. "Meanwhile we're still alive," Perele said, and she rented an apartment of five rooms. In addition to the old furniture she brought with them from Graipewo, she bought a new sofa, cupboard, a dining-room table, a linen chest, and half a dozen chairs, and had new shelves built for all her husband's books. She had the faded wallpaper in the new home peeled off and hired painters to paint the walls dark blue and the ceilings white. When the house was painted and the furniture was arranged, Perele and a maid hired for the occasion washed the windows and hung the drapes and curtains. Reb Uri-Zvi beheld all this in glazed astonishment and said in a trembling voice, "Who ever heard of a rabbi who has given up his pulpit, and retired in his old age to have a little peace and quiet, who would ever imagine him moving into such a home?" His wife replied, "God is like a father; He will provide." All his life, she said, he had urged everyone to have faith in God, yet he himself had no faith at all.

His wife even chose the synagogue in which he was to pray and study. Reb Uri-Zvi would have preferred settling into a wooden synagogue with a doorway so low that he'd have to duck his head to enter; with a bimah right in front of the Ark in a simple, homey atmosphere; with a large stove against the western wall to warm one's back against in winter; and with long, bare tables where the old men could pore over their texts beneath the pale glow of a kerosene lamp. But Perele chose a big stone synagogue with a high ceiling. The small-town Rav was always uncomfortably aware of the heavy bronze chandelier swaying over his head. Broad beams of sunlight streamed through the large windows, blinding anyone who tried to look outside. To ascend the bimah or the Ark, one had to climb stairs with wrought-iron handrails that made

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one think of a prison, God forbid. But since this was the synagogue his two sons attended, Perele insisted that he should pray and study there as well. On a holiday she could stand near the curtains of the women's section and peer out at her husband and sons standing in front of the Ark with the other kohanim, blessing the congregation. "Grant me this joy," she implored, and Reb Uri-Zvi thought: "So be it, why should I deny her this modest request?"

The Jews of Horadna spoke with excitement about the Graipewo Rav—how he had resigned his pulpit to devote himself to study and prayer. The congregants of the Stone Synagogue were particularly pleased that a new scholar had come to their sanctuary to illumine them with his Torah and his piety.

The first trustee of the Stone Synagogue, David Ganz, a man whose head constantly bobbed, was also the synagogue's Torah reader. He was as thin as a needle, but his beard was thick, flowing in rings and curls, and his eyes were large, dark, and expressionless, as if he were frozen or had drowned. The second trustee, Meir-Michael Jaffe, loved to lead the congregation when the cantor didn't officiate; his mouth was filled with gold teeth, and both his beard and his belly were smooth and round. On a holiday he wore a top hat and a dress coat.

The third trustee, by far the synagogue's biggest noisemaker, was Moshe Moskowitz, a short, sprightly man with a prickly white beard and warts on his nose. How he earned his living depended on the time of year. Before Passover he took orders for matzoh, and before Sukkoth he sold citrons. In his home one could purchase a Hanukkah lamp, a new prayer shawl, or a used set of Talmud. If a town was looking for a rabbi, or a rabbi was looking for a son-in-law, Moshe Moskowitz could be relied on to provide a worthy candidate. On the High Holidays it was he who blew the shofar, and on Simchath Torah he was the one who called out the names of those chosen for the honor of carrying the Torah scrolls. And the rest of the year it was a firmly established tradition that he would recite the Havdalah at the close of the Sabbath day.

THE former Graipewo Rav, Rabbi Uri-Zvi Ha-Kohen Koenigsberg, had not yet managed to introduce himself properly to his fellow congregants when, on a bleak afternoon a week or so before Shavuoth, the three trustees surrounded him in the synagogue and addressed him in a manner at once friendly and respectful.

"We have decided, Rabbi, that this coming Shavuoth you must deliver a discourse on the giving of the Torah," announced Moshe Moskowitz.

"The congregation is looking forward to it. We can assure you that the synagogue will be packed from wall to wall. There will be no room to breathe," sang Meir-Michael Jaffe.

" 'Everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,' says the prophet, and water everywhere is the symbol of Torah. Our town longs to hear a good sermon at least once every Jubilee year, as a dry desert thirsts for water." This from the Torah reader David Ganz, as he fixed his melancholy eyes on the rabbi.

Moshe Moskowitz, however, not being given to such florid sentiments, and much preferring a direct approach, interrupted his colleague: "Please understand that the rabbis of Horadna are fine rabbis. And the Rav, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Ha-Levi Eisenstadt, is a world-famous scholar. People come to him from every corner of the world. It's just that not one of our rabbis can deliver an inspiring sermon. So could we prevail upon you to favor us in honor of the holiday that commemorates our receiving the Torah?"

When the rebbetzin learned from her husband of this invitation, her cheeks blazed with a rosy cheerfulness—and with anger at her simpleton's reluctance. Of course he would deliver a sermon in that great stone synagogue, why shouldn't he?, she sang out. The Rabbinical Court of Horadna should have had the decency to invite him to speak in the city's main synagogue just as he had honored visiting rabbis in Graipewo by inviting them to speak, even though as scholars they didn't come up to his ankles. Since no one at the Rabbinical Court had thought of it, all the more, then, were the trustees of the other synagogues to be commended for their invitation. Besides, it was an honor for the children. A fine thing it would be for the family if the Graipewo Rav were to settle in Horadna without so much as being noticed by the townspeople.

For Perele it was the fulfillment of her fondest dreams. During services on Shavuoth morning she peered through the curtains in front of the women's section at her husband and sons standing on the bimah chanting the priestly blessing before the congregation. The other kohanim who stood there seemed to muffle their chants as if to allow the congregation better to hear the voices of the Graipewo Rav and his sons. And in the balcony the women showed the utmost respect for Perele. Nearest to her stood the wealthy elderly women, bedecked in broad-brimmed hats, some with ribbons, others with ostrich feathers. The middle-aged and less prominent women wore less elaborate hats and coats with deep pockets. The very young wives were wearing small hats and gay decorations and short veils. The richly attired matrons prayed from Redelsheimer mahzorim, prayer books with glossy covers of brown leather on which shone embossed gold lettering. The poorer women, with shawls covering their heads and necks, prayed from large mahzorim with simple dark-cloth covers, which had the Hebrew text on the top half of the page and the Yiddish translation on the bottom. But Perele, like a scholar, prayed from a delicate little siddur, printed in Jerusalem and bound in intricately carved wooden covers that depicted a palm tree hovering over Rachel's Tomb. Though she murmured the prayers steadily, her thoughtful whisper

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just barely audible, she was very much aware that all the women's eyes were trained on her and on her attire.

Another woman in such an outfit might have provoked derisive smirks, but on Perele these old-fashioned clothes only added to her noble bearing. The women in the balcony could not help thinking that this really was the way a rebbetzin should dress. Her dark-red dress had long, tight sleeves, a tightly drawn waist, and padding on her hips—a style that had long since seen its day. The sleeves barely revealed the tips of her fingers, and the skirt only the tips of her high-heeled shoes. Around her neck she wore a dark-gray fur collar, and on her wig was perched a hat no bigger than a little bird with fluttering wings. The wealthy women around her sparkled with strings of pearls, large rings, and heavy brooches. Yet somehow Perele appeared much more stately than they, even though she wore no jewelry except for simple gold earrings.

Perele's cheeks were so smooth and free of wrinkles that to look at her one could not believe she was a grandmother. Her slight build and peculiar attire made her appear like a porcelain figurine or a carved figure that springs out of a wooden music box. But when Perele raised her huge, clear eyes and wrinkled her tall forehead, one felt that this little rebbetzin was the embodiment of wisdom itself. There was about her an aura of noble breeding and gentle ways. Her pricked-up ears caught the whispers of the women around her. And who is to say they weren't talking just loud enough for her to hear?

"Her father was a great rabbi and her husband is a great rabbi. The Divine Spirit shines from his face. Her sons could have been rabbis, too, but they preferred being businessmen. And not only that—her husband even gave up his rabbinical position so he would not be dependent on people. Truly a blessed family."

"A difference of night and day, really, between her and the Horadna Rebbetzin. She shines like the sun, and the other is a pathetic, broken shard. On the other hand, you can understand her, a heart-broken mother who's lost her only child."

Perele understood that they meant the wife of Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. In the synagogue the services were over, and the women rushed to wish Perele "Good Yom Tov." "Tomorrow we say Yizkor, and after lunch, God willing, we expect to hear your husband. In fact, the whole town is looking forward to hearing him."

The rebbetzin closed her prayer book, gently kissed it, and told the women that her husband, may he live and be well, didn't really want to deliver a sermon. That was why he had stayed in such a small town . . . and he'd even left there so he wouldn't have to speak so often before a large audience. Even so, she had managed to persuade him to favor the people of Horadna with a sermon just this once.

On the second day of Shavuoth the rebbetzin once again stationed herself right behind the curtains of the women's section, surrounded by her entourage and surveying a packed synagogue listening to her husband's sermon. She couldn't see him, she could only hear his voice and see some of the men, including both her sons. Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah stood leaning on their lecterns at the front of the synagogue, listening to their father and staring intently at their fingernails. Their mother knew that this had been their habit from their yeshivah days. The harder they thought or concentrated on the discourse, the more glazed and intent was their stare at their fingernails. But today they should have had enough sense to look directly at their father so that the others could see how they hung on his every word.

Rabbi Koenigsberg did not deliver an intricate legal discourse; he spoke about the weekly Torah portion and its Midrashic interpretation in a manner which all could understand: "When the Israelites departed from Egypt, they knew that fifty days later they would stand at the foot of Mount Sinai and accept the Torah, as it is written, 'When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, *ta'avdun* —you shall serve—God upon this mountain.' The proper word for 'you shall serve' is *ta'avdu*; the addition of the letter *nun*, numerically equivalent to the number fifty, teaches that the period of fifty days from the exodus from Egypt to the Revelation at Sinai was decreed by God. It is for this reason that the days between Passover and Shavuoth are counted. To what may it be compared? A king riding in his carriage passed by a ditch in which lay a prisoner. He told the man that upon his return trip he would rescue him from the ditch. So the prisoner began counting the days to the king's return."

He then told the story of Count Potocki of Vilna, who was burned at the stake on Shavuoth for converting to Judaism. "Because of this, the main synagogue of Vilna to this day says a special memorial prayer on the second day of Shavuoth for the martyr Abraham, the convert, son of Abraham the Patriarch. A poignant word comes to us from this righteous convert: Our sages tell us that at first the Almighty offered the Torah to other nations—to Edom and to Ishmael, to Ammon and to Moab. Not one of them, however, wanted to take upon itself the yoke of the six hundred and thirteen commandments. Yet it stands to reason that there must have been a select few in each of these nations who did stand ready to accept the precepts of Torah. It is from these descendants that the converts to Judaism come in each generation. For this reason we read the Book of Ruth on the day of the Revelation of Torah. The convert Ruth must have been a descendant of those children of Moab who wanted to receive the Torah."

The majority of the listeners, simple people, enjoyed the sermon immensely, if only because they understood it all. Perele, though, watched her sons.

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It was obvious from their stolid reaction that they were less than overwhelmed by their father's address. There were others, especially the more learned men, who sat twitching their beards and wrinkling their brows. They had been expecting, it seemed, deeper thoughts or perhaps a word on some complex Talmudic text. Perele bit her lip. Her husband, she was thinking, had become dried up and foolish in his old age. The sermon was for yentes.

Suddenly, from the rear of the synagogue a murmur could be heard that swept across the throng and grew into a commotion. The thickly occupied pews began to move. The people rose one after another like an onrushing wave. The crush of people in the aisles split to make a path for an old man with a white beard and stooped shoulders. Those closest to him bowed and quietly greeted him with great respect: "Good Yom Tov, Rabbi," to which he responded with a slight, friendly nod. He walked to the very front of the synagogue and remained standing next to the Koenigsberg brothers. Someone soon brought over a lectern for the rabbi to lean on with his elbows. When Perele spied him from the balcony, she gasped to catch her breath: it was he, her first betrothed, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. Her eyes widened and her heart shrank out of pity for him. She could see how gray he had become, gray as a dove, and hunched. His arm, like a tree's half-broken branch, hung down from the lectern. His daughter's death had dealt him a great blow. But Perele's pity for him turned quickly into anger. She saw that every gaze continued to be fixed on him. Even her own sons could not take their eyes off him, as if they were anxious lest he disapprove of their father's sermon. Perele felt her lips parch: was it possible that the Horadna Rav had come to display his authority over the townspeople? Now she was looking daggers at him, and as for her husband, she nearly hissed at him: "Just look at him! He's so terrified he's practically lost his tongue."

As everyone knew, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt never delivered sermons and never came to listen to sermons. His sudden appearance at the synagogue was therefore nothing short of extraordinary, and even Rabbi Uri-Zvi Koenigsberg became flustered. After a moment he managed to recover his composure, and left his popular theme abruptly to discourse on a matter of Jewish law in honor of the esteemed guest: "We find a dispute in the Talmud about just when the Torah was given: was it the sixth day of the month of Sivan or the seventh? The dispute revolves around the interpretations of the verse 'And you shall sanctify yourselves today and tomorrow,' and is relevant in practical Halakhic matters pertaining to seminal discharges. . . ."

Perele could see that Rabbi Eisenstadt was listening with only half an ear. His wrinkled face had been consumed by his overwhelming grief. A matronly woman two heads taller than Perele leaned over and blurted out, "It's quite an honor, Rebbetzin, that our Rav has come to hear your husband. Since his only daughter died, he never goes out."

The woman had a square face that seemed to be made of kneaded clay. Wafting from her mouth came the essence of chopped liver and onions. Perele was nauseated by this tall, fat woman, but she managed to don a piteous face and sighed loudly, "Yes, yes, we heard about the sorrow, may every mother be spared."

She remembered how her father had talked about young Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt, her betrothed: "He is so great a genius that there is no way to keep pace with his brilliance." Now Perele looked at her two sons and tried to imagine what kind of children she and the Horadna Rav would have had if they had married. She could not see her husband standing in front of the Ark, but she could surmise from his unsteady voice that he was not for a moment unmindful of having in his audience none other than Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. The Horadna Rav finally grew tired and sat down on the bench. Then Perele could see only a snatch of his silver beard and his aged profile with his eyes closed.

When Rabbi Koenigsberg had begun, a blue sky had been shining in through the windows. A golden holiday glow had announced the first strains of summer. Now, the sky grew darker, as the glow had fallen from the synagogue's high windows. A green light looked through the windowpanes as if wondering why there were still so many people in the synagogue when the holiday was obviously over and the streets were already deserted. From everywhere the shadows crept out, wending their way through the crowd until they found a place to rest. But the speaker's voice found no place to hide; it hovered momentarily over everyone's head and then made its way out of the door.

5.

THE CONGREGATION left the synagogue very pleased after the Graipewo Rabbi's sermon. But this didn't prevent his rebbetzin from scolding him for speaking like an old woman or for having stood there dazed like a schoolboy when the Horadna Rav walked into the synagogue. Neither did Perele particularly care for her husband's habit of praising the Horadna Rav to the skies. "Let him praise you first," she would say, "and then you praise him." Reb Uri-Zvi couldn't understand what she wanted of him—the Horadna Rav had, after all, come to hear his sermon, which was most unusual for him. But, answered his wife, she was not at all certain whether Reb Moshe-Mordecai had really come to honor him or show he was not afraid of competition. At this Reb Uri-Zvi could only shrug his shoulders in exasperation: a scholar as great as Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt need have no fear of any competition.

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"Is he so great a scholar?" she retorted mockingly. "Perhaps in comparison with you. But my father, may he rest in peace, was a greater scholar than he. And more famous, even though he was the Rav of a much smaller place than Horadna."

His rebbetzin insisted he prepare new sermons; the people wanted to hear more. Why no discourse on Talmudic topics from the book he'd been writing all these years? And be sure to include some profound thoughts for the more sophisticated, not the fairy tales about the Vilna convert he had used in the first sermon. If he must tell stories for the common people, then at least let them be stories about the Maccabees from Josephus. She had read Josephus, and knew there were interesting stories in his works. "He may be a great scholar in your eyes, but a public speaker the Horadna Rav is not."

Reb Uri-Zvi became incensed. "And what if I can speak? Is this why we came to Horadna? So I could become a maggid?" Perele answered this with silence. She lay down on the sofa and simmered quietly, just as she had always done in Graipewo.

Like many other things in their Horadna apartment, the sofa was brand-new, with a neat brown cover and firm springs. Gone was the soft, low sofa, frayed but comfortable, of their home in Graipewo. Their windows here did not look out on a sleepy town at which one could while away hours gazing, dreaming, thinking of the past. When Perele looked out at the big-city scenes of Horadna, she saw three- and four-storied white houses that reflected the sun blindingly. The windows of the building across the way looked foreign and indifferent, covered with curtains and drapes so that neither the sun nor the neighbors could look in. On the baconies, hidden by flower pots and shrubbery, people moved about half-clad in slippers and housecoats.

People were walking into and out of the stores on the ground floors of the buildings continually, like ants at the entrance of an ant hill. Large wagons laden with goods were hauled over the cobblestones, drawn by teams of huge horses. There were carts and wheelbarrows pushed by workers, and horse-drawn buggies filled with passengers. Outside the window of the room with the sofa was a square park enclosed by a metal fence; from that height, the leafy trees had a silvery gray veneer and looked as if they had been powdered with dust. The summer had already set in with its dry, hot days, and when the wind picked up, a swirl of blackened, discarded newspaper pages rose from the park.

As she lay on the sofa, it seemed to the Graipewo Rebbetzin that her headaches were more agonizing than ever before. Here in Horadna, however, she could no longer lie about with a wet rag on her head taking spoonfuls of medicine without end, as she had done in Graipewo. Their daughter, Serel, well into her ninth month of pregnancy, stormed into their home, shouting, "If you're sick, we'll call a doctor!"

Perele replied with restraint, lest their daughter suffer harsh punishment for the grave sin of disrespect toward her mother. She raised her head from the cushion and measured her words like drops of medicine. "Don't worry about me," she said. But at this Serel shrieked, "It's not you I'm worrying about. You're perfectly well. I'm worrying about my father; you're wearing him out!" Serel would never talk like this when her father was home. She knew how it pained him to see her in any way disrespectful to her mother.

After her daughter left, Perele lay motionless like a cut-down, withered tree. Could any wife be more devoted to her husband than she? She doted on him even more than on her children. She knew very well that a husband of straw is better than children of gold. He was the crown upon her head, the apple of her eye. She never forgot for an instant how her father, of blessed memory, had admired his son-in-law's clear-headed approach to study and his warm human qualities. But just because of her devotion to him she had suffered time and again from his lack of ambition and blindness to his own worth. "Some people are just like that," she thought, "they crawl into a corner at every opportunity." The Horadna Rav, by contrast, was not content to rely on the fact that the world hung on his every word. Wherever he went, he sat in front to make sure he was seen. Her husband joked that she liked the limelight and being seen by everybody because she was so short. She managed to turn this around, though, saying that because he was so tall and broad, he declined to sit in his rightful place so as not to eclipse anyone else.

Serel gave birth to a son, her third. There wasn't even time to take her to the hospital when she suddenly went into labor, so the doctor had to rush to the house. She delivered with an angry, strident cry. Ezra Edelman remembered all too well how during Serel's first delivery, when she had given birth to the twins, he had stood outside the door of the delivery room and torn at his thick shock of hair while the time seemed to stretch into hours and his wife's cries became louder and more violent. Ezra tore at his hair this time, too, but from joy; he practically burst out laughing. "Finished already? All done, one, two, three? Thank God!" And by the third day the mother felt perfectly fine. Only her face bore a slight yellowish line, the same color as her long fingernails, and she shivered a bit.

Now she lay in bed while her husband and her mother stood beside her talking about the forthcoming brith. They were discussing how many guests to invite and which persons should receive the various honors.

"The sandak really ought to be the Horadna Rav, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt," Perele said faintly, as though conversing with her own thoughts.

"What do you mean?" Serel cried angrily, turning so violently as to make herself grimace with

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pain. "The sandak will be my father, the child's grandfather. As far as I'm concerned, my father is the greatest rabbi there is."

"Your mother also believes your father is the greatest rabbi. Why are you getting so excited?" Ezra calmed his wife, and then turned to his mother-in-law. "Why the Horadna Rav? Since when is he part of our family?"

The Graipewo Rebbetzin would have given her right arm to have those words back—she, who would have fought tooth and nail against the notion that anyone other than her husband, the father of their daughter and the newborn's grandfather, should have the honor of holding the child during the ceremony. Perele couldn't understand what had gotten into her to make such a foolish suggestion. She mumbled about having really meant . . . well, she really hadn't meant anything at all. It was just that, after all, the Horadna Rav was still in mourning for his only daughter, yet he had come to hear their father's sermon out of respect. It seemed to her that they ought to repay him in some way—that was all she had meant.

"For coming to hear Father's sermon, Father will pay him back with a visit. He doesn't owe him anything else," Serel retorted, still angry; then she turned away and said nothing more. Her mother, she suspected, wanted to parade her children and grandchildren before her former betrothed. And yet, although the hot-tempered Serel was accustomed to speaking freely to her husband of all her arguments with her mother, she refrained from telling him about this particular suspicion, even after her mother left.

Whereas Perele was a quite fastidious housekeeper —not a thing left out of place or untidy—her daughter's home was always strewn about with clothing and linens. Serel never had a moment to herself—the twins were always tugging at her apron. So the beds remained unmade until late afternoon, the dishes were left unwashed, and the broom stood vigil in the middle of the room. Whenever she needed a dress or a hat, she had no idea in which closet to look. Perele could not stomach this disorder, but she was afraid to say anything to her daughter—she could only console herself with the thought that Serel's messiness, begun as just another way of annoying her mother, had become second nature to her after her wedding.

Serel's husband, by contrast, was not in the least bothered by the disorder. Ezra, in fact, liked a home in constant commotion and with an open door to people coming and going all day. Naturally, then, he prepared for an expansive and tumultuous celebration of the brith, and invited a big crowd. Perele helped with the preparations, suffering in silence because such plain, ordinary food was being cooked: spleen, chicken giblets, stewed meat. Bowl after bowl was being filled with sauerkraut and pickled cucumber, and the platters overflowing with herring slices seemed endless. For whom were all these loaves of bread, all these bottles of whiskey, intended? Tables and benches were arranged haphazardly, with no sense of propriety. They were preparing for the brith of a rabbi's grandson as if it were a peasant's wedding in a village tavern.

ON THE morning of the brith, the guests crushed into every room of the house. People sat wherever they could, on chairs, benches, stools, even on the beds. The grandmother herself, the Graipewo Rebbetzin Perele, elaborately dressed, could barely squeeze into the room where her children were and where her husband, in his prayer shawl, sat in a deep chair, waiting for his grandchild to be placed on his lap. But the grandmother quickly pushed her way back out of the room; she couldn't stand the sweaty stench of the crowd. In the house of her father, the Staropol Rav, and even in her own house back in Graipewo, no such unruly rabble would even have been allowed to enter.

Suddenly she heard an outburst of "Mazel tov! Mazel tov!" as the infant's father lumbered around the rooms with a bottle of whiskey in each hand, pouring into all the glasses stretched out toward him from every side. An army of hands grabbed every morsel of cold food from the plates on the tables, while others rushed to the kitchen for the hot food still in the pots. In the midst of all this, Perele stood stunned. Her son-in-law, drunk and sweating, stumbled toward her shouting boisterously, "Come on, Mother-in-law, give us a hand. My guests are also your guests. Here you're no rebbetzin and no princess."

The grandmother of rabbinical descent had enough sense to know when to answer and when to act as if she had heard nothing. Without meaning to, Perele turned her thoughts to the Horadna Rav. Thank God he had not been invited to be the sandak and would not see into what company the Staropol Rav's daughter had fallen, and what sort of treatment she received from her son-in-law. She looked over at her sheepish husband; to him everything was just fine, he was enjoying himself even among this riffraff.

Not until late afternoon, when the hordes of strangers attending the brith at last thinned out, was Perele noticed by the guests. With delicate and nimble fingers she arranged platters of food and carried them to the table in the large living room, around which sat the three trustees of the large Stone Synagogue, engrossed in conversation with her husband. Her two sons were also there, as silent as ever. Behind the two brothers stood her son-in-law, hands in his pockets, listening intently to the discussion.

Meir-Michael Jaffe, gold teeth flashing from his full, rounded beard, had already offered many toasts, and now raised yet another glass of whiskey. "Le-hayyim, Rabbi. It's settled, then. You will be the permanent rabbi of our synagogue. You'll conduct a Talmud class every evening and deliver a sermon every Saturday and on holidays." David

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Ganz, the frozen-eyed Torah reader, chewed slowly on a piece of dry cake that crumbled onto his broad gray beard. Even more slowly did he chew on his words. "We'll pay you a salary every week or every month, whichever you prefer. Not that we're going to make a case of it," he joked. And the third trustee, the bantam Reb Moshe Moskowitz, licking a piece of hallah he had soaked in fish jelly, laughed: "And if you wanted to make a case of it, is there a rabbi to take it to? The Horadna Rav is busy with more earthshaking affairs, he has no time for trivial local matters."

Rabbi Koenigsberg sat at the head of the table in a broad, tall velvet yarmulke and his Sabbath coat, a bit tired from talking all day with guests, his cheeks rosy and flushed from the many tots of whiskey he had downed in honor of his grandchild's birth. The lights in the room stung his eyes, and drops of perspiration welled from behind his ears, from his forehead, from under his beard. He wiped off the perspiration with a white towel and listened attentively to the trustees.

"The head of the Rabbinical Court, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt, and the other rabbis, won't they object?" he finally asked.

"Why should Reb Moshe-Mordecai and the other rabbis object to our having a rabbi and paying him out of our own pockets?" Meir Michael Jaffe wondered aloud. And Moshe Moskowitz added quickly that, logically, the Horadna rabbis should be very pleased—as long as it wasn't at their expense, they ought to say, "Fine, the more Torah the better."

Reb Uri-Zvi looked questioningly at his two sons and his son-in-law, but all three maintained a conspiratorial silence, as if they had met together beforehand and agreed not to get involved. Reb Uri-Zvi was afraid to look at his wife; he was certain she would want him to accept. So he was stunned to hear her argue against the trustees.

"If my husband will not be able to finish his treatise, then what was the whole point of our leaving Graipewo?" The rebbetzin fidgeted nervously with the lace collar of her blouse. "The world awaits my husband's work, and that's why we came here—so he could have time for study and for work."

Her son-in-law smiled at her knowingly. "My mother-in-law can really sell the goods," he thought. Her husband looked at her dumbfounded, and her sons stared down at the table, avoiding the mocking gaze of anyone who saw through their mother.

"Who's going to disturb the rabbi in his research and prevent him from completing his work?" one trustee exclaimed. "No one is going to bother the rabbi with communal matters as in Graipewo," added a second trustee. And the third sprang up in righteous indignation and waved his hands: how could the rebbetzin compare a little nothing of a town like Graipewo to Horadna's big Stone Synagogue? More than one rabbi would give up his pulpit just to serve in one of the side rooms of the Stone Synagogue of Horadna. Besides, hadn't the rabbi and rebbetzin moved to Horadna to be near their children?

Reb Uri-Zvi listened to the conversation and calmly stroked his thick silver beard, as if to reassure it that conducting a Talmud class with the men and delivering sermons would definitely not delay the completion of his book. Perele could hardly contain her joy at her husband's ascending the pulpit of a synagogue more prestigious than the entire town of Graipewo. "And that simpleton," she thought, "he's still worried about whether the Horadna Rav is going to have any objections."

6.

Rabbi Koenigsberg began delivering his Sabbath sermons at a time of the year that was near to his heart—just after Tishah B'Av. " 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith the Lord,' as the prophet declares," he chanted in the cantillation of the Haphtorah. "The great sage, the Malbim, interprets the prophet Isaiah as saying: 'Comfort ye! once, should the Lord hasten the Redemption before its time, and once again, should the Redemption not come until its appointed time.' " The most important members of the congregation—well-to-do shopkeepers, small manufacturers, and landlords—were all religious Zionists of the Mizrachi party; this was not a synagogue in which the anti-Zionist Agudah people had much of a say. Understandably, then, Rabbi Koenigsberg's sermon was very successful. He held that it was permissible to cooperate with Zionists who were not all that observant. And he enjoyed even greater success the next week, when once again he poured out in chant his thoughts on exile and redemption and the Return to Zion.

"But Zion said, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me . . .' Zion weeps that not only has the Lord abandoned her, but He has also forgotten her!" This time even young people came to hear the Graipewo Rav, youths who would otherwise have been riding the steamer on the Sabbath up the Neman River to a soft, sandy shore where they could bathe or frolic with girls in the bushes or play cards. Yet while in town they would not smoke in the street on the Sabbath; after all, they came from good homes. So this one Saturday they gave in to their fathers and stayed to hear the new rabbi, who, it was said, didn't preach down to them but talked of the Land of Israel. True, until half-past four they could only loiter around the town, dying of boredom. When the day was hot and all the stores were closed, the hours wore on like thick tar. Time itself seemed to have come to a dead stop. Even the sun appeared to have fallen asleep in the sky, unaware that yellow molten brass was pouring out of it. The drooping branches, fainting from the heat, looked like thirsty animals stretching their necks into the

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dried riverbed. So these well-bred young men stood in the empty streets, dreaming of the soft, deep green grassy meadows and the tall cornfields where one could lie down with a girl, and they thought, "One has to be an idiot to pass that up in order to hear an old preacher with a beard." But when they were seated in the crowded synagogue and listened to the rabbi, they no longer regretted giving in to their fathers. The melody of the rabbi awakened within them the memories of their schooldays, when they had studied the weekly portion of the Torah. A golden thread was drawn out of their childhood and entwined them with the silver-haired men sitting around them. The synagogue grew dark and the rabbi's white head, high up on the pulpit, before the dark curtains of the Ark, seemed like the moon drifting out from among the clouds.

On the third Sabbath after Tishah B'Av, Rabbi Koenigsberg again interpreted the prophetic reading according to the great sage, the Malbim. "'O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted' . . . the poor, tempest-tossed daughter of Zion," expound the rabbis, "is yet unconsoled. Though her children have returned, she has not yet been rebuilt."

The Graipewo Rav's two sons, Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah, came every Sabbath to hear these sermons, as a demonstration of respect for their father. But the truth was, they were a little embarrassed that he was not delivering learned Talmudic discourses on problems of Jewish law, as befitted a scholar of his stature; instead, he was speaking like a common preacher, a maggid. The synagogue's leading members, however, were not bothered by this at all. "If there be among the listeners a scholar who doubts the depth of the Graipewo Rav's erudition," they said, "let him take the trouble to come down to the synagogue any Wednesday night and he'll hear the rabbi deliver a profound and brilliant lecture on the Talmud. But when you speak to an audience, people must be able to understand. Now, the Chief Rabbi of Horadna is a great genius, but do we have anything to show for it? When he speaks, he mutters about some esoteric point intelligible only to a few select scholars, while the rest of us sit as wide-eyed and open-mouthed as an atonement chicken about to be slaughtered on the eve of Yom Kippur."

TOWARD the end of summer an early autumn wind shook the branches, rustling leaves that had been dried by the intense summer heat. The clouds fled in silent panic one over another, but no rain fell. It did not take long for the winds to pick up, chasing away all the clouds, until nothing stood between heaven and earth except a deep empty sky that gradually filled with darkness. In the back rows of the synagogue sat the laborers with worried faces and, with them, thin shopkeepers with pointed beards, wearing long cloth coats. They wanted the rabbi to speak still longer, to soothe their hearts with yet another word of consolation. The gloom in their eyes shone back at him like a silent mirror, reflecting a dark night sky.

After such a comforting sermon a new spirit infused the traditional recitation of Psalms before the Saturday evening service. A shadowy figure on the bimah sang out a verse and the crowded pews replied by repeating the verse with a special sweetness and intensity. The words came from the depths, struggling against despair like the Patriarch Jacob, who wrestled with the angel in the dark on the other side of the river Jabbok. The trees outside became a congregation unto themselves and recited the Psalms in their leafy, windswept tongue. The rustling of the leaves on the twisted branches drifted out to the shores of the Neman, where the wind-whipped waves and swaying treetops lamented together with the synagogue: "Lord be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us, Selah."

Perele stopped going to hear her husband's sermons. She knew, however, that he was becoming very popular. The audience grew from week to week, although the other rabbis and some of the more learned men still hadn't come to hear him. And this was his own fault, she rebuked him. He should have paid each of the other rabbis a visit after he arrived in Horadna—then they would have attended. Reb Uri-Zvi replied that he was pleased that the learned men didn't come. He'd have to inject rabbinic material for them, but the trustees wanted him to talk as simply as possible about the Torah and Prophets and Midrash. The rebbetzin laughed at her simpleton of a husband who had been a rabbi for three decades and still hadn't learned that when the people understand the entire sermon from beginning to end, they lose respect for the Rav. And when the common people saw that scholars didn't come to hear their rabbi, he would be lowered in their eyes. The masses are asses.

"Have you already forgotten how your audience watched the Horadna Rav's every move to see if he was pleased with your sermon? And why haven't you paid the Chief Rabbi a visit, especially since he came to hear you?"

"I don't know," said a baffled Reb Uri-Zvi with disquietude in his large eyes. "You and Reb Moshe-Mordecai, after all, were once betrothed. I feel I ought to keep my distance from him. And he seems to feel the same way. That's the way it's been between us all these years, except when we had no choice."

"So what does that have to do with you, that we were betrothed before I knew you?" Perele answered with even wider eyes, filled with amazement. "Things happen in life, so because of such a trifle you're not paying him a visit? What's more, he's in mourning for his daughter, so you certainly ought to pay your respects."

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Reb Uri-Zvi had to admit that his dear wife was right again, and he promised her that on Saturday night, right after services, he would go directly from the synagogue to the Chief Rabbi. Perele had devised a plan to invite the wives of the town's other rabbis to tea on Sabbath afternoon. During the week she went to each of the wives, and they all promised to come. They wanted to get to know the rebbetzin who had talked her husband into retiring from the rabbinate.

ON Sabbath afternoon, while Rabbi Koenigsberg delivered his sermon in the Stone Synagogue, analyzing the Haphtorah portion—"I, even I, am He that comforteth you" —the wives of the rabbinical judges of Horadna sat in his living room partaking of the delicacies Perele had prepared: a cake filled with cherries and lavishly sprinkled with powdered sugar and grated lemon peel; fluffy white meringues and dry sugar cookies. There were plates laden with fruit, and a large glass bowl of walnuts and filberts. The hostess took a kettle from the oven and filled the cups with clear, wine-colored tea.

The wife of the Wolkowysk Street Rabbi grasped two hard walnuts in her masculine hand and crushed them with one motion, as if with an iron nutcracker. A broad, stocky woman with a plain kerchief on her head, she had the steaming face of someone just emerging from the ritual baths. In her husky voice she shouted: "If only God would be so good to me, my husband could give up his post in Horadna. Better to be a woodchopper than to be a public rag everyone uses to dry their hands when they leave the baths. If the rabbi declares the chicken not kosher, the housewife says he has a cruel heart; if he declares it kosher, the woman's husband suddenly becomes pious and doesn't trust the rabbi anymore. He tells everyone that the rabbi is putty in the hands of the women. And it hasn't happened yet that one side in a litigation doesn't become the rabbi's bitter enemy. If he doesn't talk enough to people, they say he's arrogant; and if he does talk to people, they say he's a gossip. They all watch him to see if he's wearing a new hat, and they watch his wife to make sure she isn't buying too good a piece of meat for Sabbath. A rabbi has to be a confirmed pauper for his congregation not to begrudge him the rabbinate. I tell you, we all can be envious of the Graipewo Rebbetzin for having rid herself of all this."

"Please, don't call me the Graipewo Rebbetzin. I am not that anymore." Perele smiled sweetly as she moved the plates closer to her guests.

"My husband and I are not complaining about the Jews of Horadna," sang out the wife of the Schloss Street Rabbi. "They're all very fine Jews."

"Well, your husband is chummy with everyone and you carry on with every woman as if she were your dearest sister. So naturally your husband has more income than just his salary. He's the permanent officiant at a hall that caters expensive weddings, and the businessmen all come to him to settle their arguments," burst out the husky Wolkowysk Street Rebbetzin as she cracked open another pair of nuts in her hands.

BASHKA, the Schloss Street Rebbetzin, did indeed get along very well with people. She was by nature a gentle person with a happy disposition and fanatically religious. Whole locks of chestnut hair winked attractively from under her hat. She had no qualms about wearing the latest styles: a white blouse with an embroidered neckline and a suit of black and gray stripes, with sharp, angular shoulders. She had placed her large black handbag and her long black gloves on the table. It was plain to anyone that she was very pleased with her appearance, as she constantly gazed approvingly at herself in a small hand mirror. When Bashka spoke, she cocked her head charmingly, like some innocent, slender, peaceful creature lapping water at a forest stream. One glance from her husband was enough for her wise and alert eyes to see all that was going on among the rabbis, but she never discussed anything except children, clothing, and food. So, instead of getting into an argument with the embittered Wolkowysk Street Rebbetzin, Bashka calmly chewed a small piece of cake and sipped tea.

"This cake melts in your mouth," she declared with the assurance of a connoisseur. "It has sugar, crushed almonds, cinnamon, and cloves—am I right, Graipewo Rebbetzin?"

"True, but please don't call me Graipewo Rebbetzin. I'm not the Graipewo Rebbetzin anymore." Perele smiled sweetly once again.

"Our Rav's wife, Sarah-Rivkah, also does not want to be called rebbetzin," said the wife of the Old Marketplace Rabbi, nodding under a huge Sabbath headdress adorned in false pearls, with silver-plated beads that covered her ears. An elderly woman with a shriveled, wizened face, the Old Marketplace Rebbetzin had reached that stage in life when the head constantly shakes and the hands tremble. Not one of her teeth was left in her mouth. Yet, old and hunched as she was, she loved to dress up in brightly colored kerchiefs, layered one after another, and scarves on top of scarves, shawls on top of shawls. Everything on her was pleated, a blend of colors, and though faded and worn, her clothes had the exotic bearing of ancient Oriental nobility.

"Since the Rebbetzin Sarah-Rivkah lost her only child, she completely shuns people," sighed Bashka goodheartedly.

"Please, I have nothing against the Horadna Rebbetzin. She has always been a kindly and outgoing woman, even if her husband is none other than Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt," the burly Wolkowysk Street Rebbetzin said in as gentle a tone as she could manage. "Her husband, our town's Rav, is, after all, the Jewish Pope."

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"What do you mean, the Jewish Pope?" Perele asked.

"Well, if you'll forgive the comparison, as great as the Pope is to the Gentiles so is our Rav to the Jews. People come to see him from all over the world."

Thick praise for the Horadna Rav oozed from the woman as if she were talking about an older brother. "Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt receives questions from every corner of the globe and he answers each one of them, the great and small alike. The rabbis and the organizations in America who collect money for yeshivahs and charities here in Europe send all of it to him to dole out. They say the great Hofetz Hayyim of Radun doesn't make a move without consulting him. At the rabbinical conferences in Vilna and Warsaw, the Horadna Rav's word carries as much weight as that of all the other rabbis put together. Even the Hasidic rabbis of Poland pay deference to him, though he's a Lithuanian and a misnaged. And in spite of all this, his Sarah-Rivkah is his queen. The house may be packed with rabbis and the most important Jews of the town, but he'll leave everyone the instant he hears his rebbetzin call him to her room. Since the death of their only daughter, may God have mercy on us, Sarah-Rivkah has been acting quite strangely. She calls him just when he's overwhelmed with important business and keeps him for hours. But the Rav never loses patience with her. On the contrary, he talks to her understandingly until she has calmed herself. He has even stopped traveling to rabbinical gatherings, so as not to leave his wife alone."

"But he has no talent for delivering a sermon, and the people of Horadna are very displeased about this," Perele unthinkingly blurted out. She would have given anything to call back these hastily uttered words, but the Wolkowysk Street Rebbetzin lost no time in pouncing on her, bellowing, "It's a sorry state we've come to when Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt has to depend for his living on being able to please the Jews of Horadna. The whole world regards him as the greatest Talmudic scholar of our time. Rabbis come from everywhere to hear words of Torah from him. But the boors of Horadna would like him to stand in front of the Ark and give them fairy tales, clever interpretations, and cute parables. Is there any justice in this world?" And the old woman from the Old Marketplace chimed in, her voice rasping through her toothless gums: "We have plenty of preachers, thank God, but the Horadna Rav is in a class by himself."

Bashka alone felt pity for the Graipewo Rebbetzin, whose face was changing colors. "Don't say that," Bashka said sharply to the other two women. "Speaking before people is a difficult skill. My husband also speaks sometimes to the people in his synagogue, but he's nowhere near as brilliant an orator as the Graipewo Rav. All of Horadna runs to the Stone Synagogue to hear him. They say he is a master of his craft."

The Graipewo Rebbetzin wanted to shout that her husband was also a brilliant scholar, not just a preacher. But she realized that there was no way to salvage any dignity here, so she kept still. Her suppressed anger brought on needle-like pains in her chest and spasms in her knee. Desperate not to reveal her suffering, she intently peered out the window and reckoned aloud: "Let's see, candle-lighting was five minutes to six, so when will we be able to make Havdalah and turn on the lights?" Pleased that the room was dark and no one could see her face, Perele bit her lip and heaved a heavy sigh to clear the choking feeling in her throat.

7.

IT HAD been the custom for the Horadna Rav's inner circle to visit him every Sabbath afternoon to discuss matters of Jewish learning and converse about affairs of the day. But for the first few weeks of Rabbi Eisenstadt's mourning for his only daughter these Sabbath get-togethers had ceased. His intimates came only for services in the morning and evening so that he would not have to go out to the synagogue. The young men in this group noticed how the Rav rushed through the prayers; he would be the first to finish the Silent Prayer, and would recite the mourner's Kaddish in a rapid murmur. The group would leave in silence. Not until the young men were outside did they voice their observation that, whereas the Rav had cried bitterly at his daughter's funeral while his wife stood frozen, now it was she who spent the entire day in the bedroom sobbing while he struggled to get back to his normal routine.

Eventually, the Rav asked them to resume their Sabbath afternoon visits. They came, but they noticed immediately that his scintillating observations on life and Torah were no more. He had become more hunched; his white beard was even whiter and had split into two pointy wisps. His mourning lay on his face, more in his silence than in his speech.

On a Saturday night in the middle of the Hebrew month of Elul, about mid-September, after the Havdalah ceremony, Rabbi Eisenstadt's house was filled with people. He sat in his court chamber at a desk piled high with books and, as usual, was engaged in several activities at once. From time to time he looked into an open book that lay at his left on the table and copied from it onto a large white sheet of paper—a responsum to an intricate rabbinical problem. At one side of the desk stood a short woman wrapped in a shawl, pouring out the details of her hard life since her husband, a poor dedicated scholar, had died. On the other side of the desk stood the Rav of a small town, a man with sparkling light-blue eyes

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and a red beard, who had been expounding a point in rabbinics until his discourse was brought to a halt by the plaintive tale of the poor widow. "Speak, speak, I hear every word." Moshe-Mordecai smiled at the Rav as he reached into a drawer and withdrew a blank piece of paper with his name printed at the top. With a neat, flowing script, the letters nestling and winding into each other, he wrote a few lines on the paper as straight as a ruler, addressed to the town's charity committee. He folded the letter and handed it to the widow. The small-town Rav, pleased to be rid of this talkative woman, moved closer to Rabbi Eisenstadt and whispered to him of his eagerness to assume the Graipewo pulpit now that it had become vacant, and his hope that he would have in this the support of the head of the Horadna Rabbinical Court.

"I don't know if I should get involved and thereby spoil the chances of the other candidates," murmured Reb Moshe-Mordecai as he reached for the narrow red notebook in which he recorded the charity funds he had distributed each Friday. This did not perturb the red-bearded guest, who drew himself up and commenced delivering his full-blown discourse, in the hope of demonstrating to the Rav that he was more worthy of the Graipewo pulpit than other candidates. Engrossed in recording his disbursement of charity, Reb Moshe-Mordecai listened with only half an ear. Suddenly he interjected, in a casual nasal tone, an objection to the rabbi's reasoning which left the latter frozen, open-mouthed, his woven beard lying as still as a sculpture and his thumb suspended in mid-air.

At that moment a restaurant proprietor approached to request the Rav's endorsement of the kashruth of his establishment. He was a tall man with many rings on his fingers and a full face, with smooth red cheeks and a round, thick black goatee that flowed from under an upturned black mustache. The beard and mustache gave the impression of having been donned specifically for this occasion. The Rav darted a quick glance at the restaurateur and laughed a quiet laugh.

"Tell, me, my good man, are the people who eat in your restaurant so pious that they will not eat there unless there is supervision of the kashruth?"

"Such pious people don't eat in my restaurant," the restaurateur answered loudly with a cheerful, boisterous laugh. "I had heard, Rabbi, that, besides being learned, you're also very sharp. Now I see they were right."

Seeing that he had no chance of getting his endorsement, the man promptly left. Right behind him came two trustees of the Talmud Torah, wearing small Polish caps with visors, wrinkled boots, and long coats. They blew smoke from rolled cigarettes into the air like chimneys, and spoke angrily: "Those bratty orphans are turning the place upside down and breaking the furniture. Everything, from the mattresses to the Bibles, is in tatters, and they themselves walk around in filthy rags. The townspeople aren't paying their weekly tax, and from the kehillah allocations there's not enough for a bowl of kasha, and now the teachers are threatening to go out on strike if they don't get a raise, just like the teachers in the public schools. That's how they're talking!" The trustees shouted, and pointed to two teachers who had come as a delegation.

One teacher—with a broad snow-white beard and a thick mustache that completely netted his lips as if to conceal any desire to imbibe of the pleasures of this world—stood calm and unruffled. The second teacher was a thin, dark-eyed young man, beardless, intense, and still wearing the student's cap of a Polish university. Speaking with the melodious accent of Warsaw, he heatedly declared that he was under no obligation to starve. He was teaching in the Talmud Torah only because he was an observant Jew, but if he was not paid, he'd have to teach in a secular school. The teacher with the dignified mustache suggested similarly that he could, if he wished, become a teacher in a fine religious school for higher-class children.

The trustees, in reply, accused them of acting like Bolsheviks: "We have to worry about orphans and care for them, but you don't?" The Rav, by this time totally exhausted, raised his hands and pleaded with both sides to stop arguing. A meeting of the kehillah would have to be called, and he'd be there as well. A solution would be found, they could be sure of that, but, please, let the teachers not interrupt the poor children's schooling.

IN THE next room sat the men of the Rav's inner circle. He had asked them to visit him in the afternoon and to remain after Sabbath ended at nightfall. But after Havdalah, when the townspeople besieged the Rav with problems, the disciples moved to another room.

Rabbi Eisenstadt's circle consisted of young men native to Horadna who had studied in yeshivahs all over Lithuania, and were now being supported by their fathers-in-law. They were all favorite sons, with rosy cheeks, moist lips, soft, youthful beards, blond or black, piercing gazes, and quick, abrupt movements. Some had already started a business, others had entered the rabbinate, and still others had not yet decided whether to become businessmen or assume pulpits. For the time being, they were living with their parents or in-laws and busying themselves with Agudah politics. They looked upon Rabbi Eisenstadt, who was chairman of the Rabbinical Association of Poland, as their leader. Although he never came into open conflict with the Mizrachi, it was well known that he stood behind these fiery zealots of the Agudah.

Two young men, wearing their fine Sabbath

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frock coats with silken lapels, sat on a bench. Another lifted the bottom of his coat about his waist and half sat on the edge of the table. Two others stood near the bookcase, engrossed in conversation as they leafed through Talmudic commentaries. And two others gazed out the window at a couple strolling by. The main topic of conversation was the Graipewo Rav; they were all seething over him.

"Since he's been speaking in the Stone Synagogue every Sabbath about returning to the Land of Israel, the Mizrachi have come into their own."

"We ought to talk to his sons, the Koenigsberg brothers. They may be only shoe merchants, but they are, after all, yeshivah graduates. Let *them* explain to their simpleton of a father that he's playing with fire."

"The sons weren't happy about his becoming a maggid in the first place. They say their mother, the Graipewo Rebbetzin, is behind all this. She maneuvered him into becoming the maggid in a synagogue crawling with Mizrachi."

One of the group opened the door to the Rav's room and looked in to see if the visitors had left yet. He quickly closed the door and turned suddenly to the others with his finger on his lips. "Shh! Speak of the devil, there he is! The Graipewo Rav!" The young Agudahniks looked at one another, surprised and pleased: Divine Providence had guided him into their hands to be given the lesson of his life.

One by one, they entered the other room with careful, quiet steps and took their places along the wall behind the Horadna Rav's chair, like a king's retinue.

All the townspeople who had come to see Rabbi Eisenstadt had left. Seated now at the table were only himself and his guest. The reddish glow of the lamp cast shadows into the corners of the room as the two rabbis talked in friendly, hushed voices. The Horadna Rav asked about the people of Graipewo and the Rav's salary there: several rabbis from smaller towns were interested in assuming the post, and had inquired about some details. Rabbi Koenigsberg answered guardedly that, though the salary was modest, the congregants of Graipewo were fine people.

Since he had come to console the Horadna Rav, Reb Uri-Zvi now uttered a deep sigh and said he had heard even in Graipewo about the tragedy.... Reb Moshe-Mordecai shuddered and hastily interrupted to ask his guest about his grandchildren—were they going to school yet? Reb Uri-Zvi replied about his grandchildren and then sighed again as he continued: he had left Graipewo in order to get the peace and quiet he needed for his study and writing; but now too much of his time was devoted to preparing sermons for the great Stone Synagogue. But Reb Moshe-Mordecai did not want to hear about this either, so he made another inquiry this time with a broad smile on his face: hadn't he heard that the Graipewo Rav's daughter had made him a grandfather again? He owed him a "Mazel tov!"

"The Stone Synagogue had no right to install a maggid without the permission of the Horadna Court," a young man standing behind Rabbi Eisenstadt said sharply. "It seems the Graipewo Rav is unaware that the congregants of the Stone Synagogue are the ringleaders of the Mizrachi and that they're using his sermons about the Return to Zion to further their cause."

Reb Uri-Zvi looked up, his eyes filled with surprise and apprehension; till now, he hadn't even noticed the young men standing in the shadowy corners of the room.

Reb Moshe-Mordecai turned and spoke harshly to the angry young man: "The Graipewo Rav does well to be talking to Jews about returning to the Land of Israel. Is there, then, a God-fearing Jew who wouldn't like to see the Holy Land rebuilt?" He turned quickly back to his guest and, in a soft voice, excused his rash disciple: "When we were young, scholars never meddled in party politics. But these days the danger of heresy is much greater and the forces of doubt are much more cunning. The rabbis of the older generation often cannot recognize where this heresy lies, or its many guises. So the young scholars are forced to become embroiled in politics."

The young men looked knowingly and smiled at one another through the dimness. They understood very well that Rabbi Eisenstadt was in full agreement with them, and was simply phrasing it more politely.

Just then a maid came into the room and said to the Rav in a low, weary voice, "The rebbetzin is crying again. She's calling you." Instantly a look of sadness passed over Reb Moshe-Mordecai's face; he rose abruptly and, muttering some words of apology to his guest—"I don't know how long I'll be gone. You're welcome to stay, if you care to wait"—he hurried from the room.

The moment Rabbi Eisenstadt left, the young men descended on Rabbi Koenigsberg. They shouted at him with such vehemence that he sat flustered, open-mouthed, unable to say a word, his eyes wide with astonishment at the way these youngsters were berating a rabbi many years their senior. Finally the scholar in him became enraged and he rose, his face aflame with indignation. He grabbed his overcoat from the hook near the door and went out into the street without a word.

AT FIRST he walked quickly, panting as if he were being chased. Then he stood still, wiping the sweat from under his collar, straining his face toward the heavens as if asking the Almighty what heresy he had been espousing in his sermons that he deserved such abuse? "A Mizrachi rabbi is as bad as a heretic!" one young man had screamed at him. Overhead a pale light seeped through the thick clouds as they flew across the sky. A sudden gust of wind blew his broad,

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flat hat off his head. He just managed to grab it by the brim with one hand as he held his yarmulke by its edge with the other hand. For an anxious moment he feared they would both blow away and he would have to walk through the streets of Horadna bareheaded. His ears still rang with a sarcastic remark by one of Reb Moshe-Mordecai's young followers: that he should thank God he hadn't another daughter to marry off—"a Mizrachi rabbi can't get a son-in-law in the yeshivahs."

As if that weren't enough, when he arived home he found his wife lying on the sofa with a damp cloth on her forehead. All the lights in the house were on, as if she had awakened from a bad dream and was afraid of the shadows. Strewn over the fine linen tablecloth were the nearly empty platters from the rebbetzins' tea. Perele's full afternoon of conversation with her guests had made her ill.

This one time, however, her husband was unmindful of her frayed nerves, and he let all his anger out on her. To shame and humiliate him, that was why she had taken him out of Graipewo and made him a maggid in Horadna. And to shame and humiliate him, that was why she had sent him to Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. He proceeded to give a full account of his visit to the Rav, in the course of which he remembered something else an Agudahnik had yelled at him: that he and his entire Stone Synagogue weren't worth an onion compared to the Chief Rabbi of Horadna, the Rav of all Jewry.

"Do you hear? An onion! That's what I am, compared to the Horadna Rav, and to them he is no less than the Rav of all Jewry. And not only that, one of his followers insulted me in front of him just before he was called away to his wife, and he didn't appear to me to be much disturbed by this, even if he did pretend to speak harshly to them."

"My guests today, the rebbetzins, also prattled on about how he is the Jewish Pope, how he is in a class by himself, while of maggidim there are plenty." Perele spoke very quietly and pointed weakly to a chair near the sofa, motioning him to sit down near her. "When I saw how angry you were when you came in, I thought it was because of something the Rav had said about me."

His heavy hands resting on his knees, a perplexed Reb Uri-Zvi sat down beside his wife. Why on earth should the Horadna Rav speak ill of her? Because they had once been engaged to be married? He hadn't seemed to remember at all that Perele had once been his betrothed. Reb Uri-Zvi went on to say that no matter what he had tried to talk about, the Rav had interrupted him abruptly and inquired about their grandchildren, as if it was beneath him to discuss such matters with the former Graipewo Rav.

Perele looked at her husband with eyes that seemed made of molten glass as she dampened her dry lips with the tip of her tongue. She was lying on her back with her hands stiffly at her side, as if unable to move. "He's forgotten already that I was once to be his bride? Never mind, he'll remind himself yet!" she whispered to herself. She asked her husband why he hadn't taken their sons with him to the Rav. After all, Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah had attended his sermon as usual that afternoon in the synagogue. He should have taken them along.

"And if I had taken them along, would they have made me more important in the Rav's eyes? Do you think his followers would have been afraid to insult me before my own sons? I don't know." He shrugged as he turned in his chair. "Today you're talking sheer nonsense. Did you hear what I said? To his followers I am a nothing; in their eyes he is nothing less than the Chief Rabbi of all the Jews in the world!"

Perele wanted to say that Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah also had a higher regard for the Horadna Rav than for their own father, but instead she said in a choking, sickly voice, "The wives of the Horadna rabbis are right, and that gang of Moshe-Mordecai's followers, that band of underlings, they're also right. A maggid in a synagogue is one thing and the Rav of a city is quite another. A maggid doesn't command the respect of a Rav." From now on, he would not be speaking in the Stone Synagogue. If he was so dear to the trustees as they claimed, then let them arrange, by hook or by crook, for him to become a member of the Horadna Rabbinical Court and be paid from the treasury like all the other rabbis. Only then would he deliver sermons in their synagogue. And if he wouldn't listen and continued to speak before becoming a rabbinical judge, then he might as well start preparing a eulogy for her.

Rabbi Koenigsberg had been about to make an angry retort when her talk of dying startled him. And in truth, he was quite pleased that Perele was so concerned to fight for his honor. The Horadna Rav might indeed be the Horadna Rav, but he, Uri-Zvi, had also dedicated himself to the study of Torah for many years, and as a Rav he was not allowed to demean his own standing as a scholar or to accept any diminution of the respect that was his due.

8.

AFTER THE summer dryness, the wind had by early autumn already shaken many of the scorched leaves from the trees. Then came the rainy days, and the remaining clusters of leaves hung here and there, soaked and swollen. A cold, lazy mustiness stung the nostrils. Dampness seeped into the bones and stiffened the joints. Not until late in the fall did the weather suddenly clear and the last remaining leaves on the bared branches shine delicately with a transparent golden hue. The townspeople took off their galoshes and raincoats and left their umbrellas home. Faces were smiling

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once more at the cleansed blue sky as they basked in the fall's last rays of sunshine. But the pious and learned Jews of Horadna were not soothed by the healing wings of the sun; their beards and eyes were ablaze with dissension.

At the head of the table in his court chamber sat Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. On one side of the table sat the other judges of the Rabbinical Court, and opposite them sat the trustees of the Stone Synagogue. This session had already dragged on for quite a long time. There had been ample opportunity for both sides to argue in anger and then apologize several times. The rabbi from the Old Marketplace, a kindly old man with a small beard and spectacles, was forever warding off evil eyes and bestowing blessings on everyone; but now his anger caused him to sputter in a deep, rusty giggle: "Heh, heh, heh, just because some maggid from some small town can explain a simple verse of the Bible, does that mean we have to make him a judge on the Horadna Court?"

The Schloss Street Rabbi, a man with a soft beard and broad shoulders and wise, quick eyes, was known to be soft-hearted by nature, yet thoroughly adept in business matters and in dealing with people, as was his good-natured and fashionable wife, Bashka. But now he stroked his long, downy beard into two neat parts and nervously rocked to and fro in great agitation. "We mustn't belittle the Graipewo Rav by calling him just a small-town maggid. He is really a fine scholar and a decent human being. The question, however, is: how can we afford to share the meager salary of the court with yet another judge?"

"Impossible!" shouted the Wolkowysk Street Rabbi, a fastidious man with a stooped back, a long gray beard, and thick black eyebrows like bundles of wire. "Even if the Graipewo Rav were as great as Rabbi Akiva Eiger and even if the court treasury were brimming with gold, we could not permit ourselves to seat another judge just because the Stone Synagogue requests it. Tomorrow the trustees of every other synagogue will come to demand that we seat *their* rabbis on the court. Impossible!"

"Even a rabbi of Horadna cannot bring his son or son-in-law onto the court unless he is of equal stature in scholarship, and even then only with the consent of the entire court," Rabbi Eisenstadt declared in support of the other judges, though he spoke calmly and softly.

But the committee of trustees was not to be silenced. Meir-Michael Jaffe, his gold teeth shining, was the first to answer the judges: "But if the Graipewo Rav were to denigrate the Mizrachi people and call them 'worse than Karaites,' instead of talking about building the Land of Israel, you wouldn't be arguing against him."

"And how *are* the Mizrachi any better than Karaites?" retorted the Wolkowysk Rabbi in sharp, mocking tones. "Neither of them has any respect for the words of the rabbis."

David Ganz fixed his melancholy eyes on the judge. "Are we supposed to have respect for the rabbis? In our synagogue we have ordinary worshippers who are greater scholars than the judges on the Horadna Court!"

Moshe Moskowitz no longer cared to argue with the other judges; he addressed himself directly to the Rav: "Two of our members are on the town council, and they can arrange matters with the other councilmen at any time. So, if the court will not seat the Graipewo Rav, then we'll have the council appoint him to the bench."

"Well, if that's the case, we have nothing further to discuss," an incensed Reb Moshe-Mordecai said curtly as he rose from his seat; he particularly disliked Moshe Moskowitz for his impudence. But Moshe Moskowitz, not the least bit fazed, answered, "Indeed, there is nothing more to discuss. If the court is looking for an argument, so be it. Come, gentlemen!" he said to the others.

As they stood at the doorway, Moshe Moskowitz turned and said to the Rav, "None of this is our fault. The Chief Rabbi's supporters, they're the ones to blame—if they hadn't insulted the Graipewo Rav in this very house about his sermons, his rebbetzin would not have forbidden him to preach in our synagogue and we would not have had to defend his honor."

Instantly, Rabbi Eisenstadt saw to the bottom of the whole affair. Aha! So this was the work of the Staropol Rav's daughter! Not wanting the others to see the angry light of understanding that flashed in his eyes, he cast them down on his beard, murmuring to himself, "Yes, even as a young girl she was a shrew."

After the committee had left the court chamber, the long table, with the judges sitting all on one side and the other side empty, seemed like a man with only half a beard. The judges fidgeted in their places, like the rattling covers of pots of boiling water. "Such gall! Such hutzpah!" But Reb Moshe-Mordecai, addressing himself wearily to the white tips of his beard, observed that their enemies would now have something to use against them: the Horadna rabbis refuse to allow anyone else to join them.

His colleagues looked at their Chief Rabbi in bewilderment. True, he was a compassionate man, but he was also known as one who stood his ground and would not budge unless there was no other way out. And the Graipewo Rav did not, after all, have such a strong case for being seated on the Horadna Court. "We've got to think this over carefully," Moshe-Mordecai repeated, and long after the others had left, he sat lost in thought.

REB Moshe-Mordecai had always tried to be very friendly to the Graipewo Rav's sons, thinking that the sedate and dignified young Koenigsberg brothers must surely take after their father. And it just might have been that their mother was not the shrew he had thought her to be when, as a young man, he had broken off their

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engagement. Now he felt certain that his first impressions of her were not at all mistaken. No doubt about it, she was the one fanning the flames of this controversy. And yet, he felt it would be unseemly to contend with the husband of his former betrothed.

"Why did you allow them to argue so? And what harm is there in having another rabbi on the court?"

These words came from behind his chair, where Sarah-Rivkah stood. She was ten years younger than her husband, not yet fifty. Her thin frame, her gaunt, clear face, the pitch-black hair under her kerchief, and her coal-black eyes made her appear even younger. But her long, bony chin and the flat chest under her clothes robbed her of womanly appeal. Outside, the fall day was dry and warm, but Sarah-Rivkah shivered and rubbed her arms as if she had just gotten out of a bed with frozen covers.

"The new rabbi will not take your place or overshadow you in the eyes of the Horadna Jews, nor in the eyes of the Jews who come to you from elsewhere."

Reb Moshe-Mordecai could see in the smile in his wife's eyes that she, too, felt it would be best for him to avoid any dispute with the husband of the Staropol Rav's daughter.

"I'm not afraid, and I'm not at all worried that he will overshadow me," he answered, opening and peering into one of the volumes that lay on the table. He wanted to avoid discussing his old fiancée with his wife, especially while they were both still in mourning for their only child. But Sarah-Rivkah was not reluctant to discuss this openly. Since he had once shamed the Staropol's daughter by calling off their engagement, he ought to take special pains not to shame her again by refusing to allow her husband to sit on the court.

"You talk as if everything depended upon me," Reb Moshe-Mordecai said curtly, closing the volume and rising from the table. "In seating another rabbi on the court, the other judges have just as much of a say as I. And they simply don't want him! They don't! If this happened in another town and I were asked to rule on the case, I would rule against the Graipewo Rav, and find him in the wrong to try and force his way onto the court by creating a public outcry."

At that moment two young men, well dressed and reserved in manner, entered the Rav's house. Sarah-Rivkah watched as her husband went to greet them with great warmth, while his face betrayed a greater anxiety. "Sholem Aleichem! These are the Koenigsberg brothers," Rabbi Eisenstadt introduced the guests to his wife. "The sons of the Graipewo Rav, both married into Horadna families." Sarah-Rivkah understood by her husband's wink that he wanted her to leave. She looked at the young men first with surprise, then with curiosity and warmth, and finally with a confused stare . . . and then quietly left the chamber.

The Koenigsberg brothers politely answered the Rav's friendly queries about their families and businesses, but they could not muster the courage to tell him the reason for their visit. Rabbi Eisenstadt tried to help them: no doubt they had come to say that they had no part in their father's quarrel with the Horadna Court. Well, they could rest assured that he was aware of this. Elated that the Rav laid none of the blame on them, the younger brother said that he, as well as his brother and sister, did not feel that their father's leaving the Graipewo pulpit had been the best thing for him.

"Your father probably didn't want to bear the burden of a congregation any longer," the Rav said in an innocently probing tone. "Yes, our father no longer cared to remain in Graipewo," the older brother replied, heaving a long sigh. And at the same moment the thought flashed through Reb Moshe-Mordecai's mind: "More likely, their mother no longer cared to remain in such a small town."

Silence flooded the room. Bands of light played on the leather spines on the bookshelves. A large, buzzing fly was crashing rhythmically against a windowpane with heavy thuds. The two brothers shot glances at each other, each urging the other to speak—they shouldn't be wasting the Rav's time like this. Finally, the elder brother coughed, loudly cleared his throat, and asked if there wasn't something they could do to help end the controversy. This feigned innocence annoyed the Rav, who answered sharply that indeed there was a great deal they could do: they could prevail upon their father to drop his demand for that which was neither legally nor morally his due.

"It's not our father," replied the younger brother. "It's the trustees of the synagogue that are behind all this."

The Rav dismissed this argument with an impatient wave of his hand. He rose and walked to the window: "Don't tell that to me. You have studied Talmud, haven't you? 'It is not the mouse that is the thief, but the hole!' "

Again the brothers looked at each other. The Rav's standing at the window with his back toward them, they decided, meant the conversation was over and they must depart.

As they were leaving, Gedaliah, the younger brother, screwed up his courage and resolutely told the Rav that if his father was not seated on the court, the dispute would get hotter. The Rav acknowledged with a nod that he had heard, and as soon as the two brothers left, he went into the bedroom excited and upset.

"First they tell me they have nothing to do with this," he said to his wife, who was sitting on the edge of the bed, "and then they threaten that if their father isn't made a member of the court, the dispute will get worse."

SARAH-RIVKAH had quickly hidden their daughter's photograph under the pillow when she heard her husband's approaching footsteps—she did not want him to be aggrieved

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over her inability to let go of their little Blumele's picture. When Reb Moshe-Mordecai entered the room, Sarah-Rivkah was sitting stiffly, staring at a large portrait photograph of her mother on the wall. A heavy wig framed her long face and sharp-angled jaw; a pained, taut smile played on her lips. Sarah-Rivkah remembered that her father had never wanted to be photographed—"idolized," he would call it. "What am I, a sacred inscription, the name of the Almighty engraved on the cover of the Ark, that the living have to look at me?" He hadn't wanted to leave any remembrance of himself for the children. That was why, Sarah-Rivkah thought, her mother's smile had been so pained when she had had her picture taken without her husband.

Engrossed in his own thoughts, Reb Moshe-Mordecai at last declared loudly that the Graipewo Rav's sons were, at least, not nearly so brazen as the trustees of the Stone Synagogue. The brothers had stammered and stuttered a long time before they could come out with what their father had forced upon them as obedient sons. "And how do you know it was their father who forced them?" Sarah-Rivkah said, her dim eyes suddenly coming to life. "Perhaps they were pushed into this by their mother. The Graipewo Rebbetzin imagines that you will soften when you see her sons."

Her husband looked at her quizzically for a moment and then remembered the passage in the Talmud: "A wife knows her guests better than her husband." With his hands clasped behind him, he turned abruptly and walked about the bedroom muttering that it really didn't matter who sent them. The Graipewo Rav was a newcomer to Horadna, he had no standing here and no basis for any claim.

Sarah-Rivkah again gazed on her mother's elaborately formal portrait and said, as if she were reading the answer from it, "The Graipewo Rav has every right. His children live in Horadna and a Horadna synagogue wants him as a rabbi." She then turned from her mother's portrait and smiled at her husband. "And besides, you mustn't stand in the way. Don't let people say that you're jealous of him because his wife was once your bride-to-be and you are still upset that the engagement was broken."

Reb Moshe-Mordecai, alarmed and angry, shouted at her, "What nonsense!"

Sarah-Rivkah laughed anxiously, but her face became even paler and her long, bony chin quivered. "I'm not saying you really feel that way; only that the townspeople will say that." She was silent a moment and then laughed even more sadly. "Really, Moshe-Mordecai, why didn't you marry the Staropol Rav's daughter? I think you would have fared much better with her. You would have had beautiful children with her, just like her two handsome sons. I understand she has a daughter, too, and from all her children she has grandchildren! Maybe God has punished us because you shamed her as a young girl." Large, cold tears ran from Sarah-Rivkah's eyes.

Reb Moshe-Mordecai's anger left him. He lovingly stroked her head, and in a trembling voice he pleaded with her not to cry. Why should they be punished because of the Staropol Rav's daughter? She hadn't been shamed, after all, or left an old maid. She had a husband and children and grandchildren.

Sarah-Rivkah clung to her husband, breathing heavily into his warm beard. "You mustn't stand in the way of the Graipewo Rav's becoming a judge here," and her husband promised her he would not oppose it. But how was he going to get the other rabbis to agree?

9.

THE Horadna Rebbetzin, Sarah-Rivkah, was named after her great-grandmother, the mother of the sage Rabbi Alexander Ziskind, author of *The Foundations and Principles of Prayer*. In it he examined the holy thoughts which must flow through one's mind during prayer and how one must reach the point where at any moment one is prepared to lay down his life in the name of God. When Rabbi Alexander Ziskind passed away, he left two testaments to his children which came to be called the major and minor testaments, and a separate set of instructions for the burial society. He directed those who prepared his body for burial to place a stone on his heart, then to throw his body onto the earth from a high place, then to singe his beard with a candle's flame, and then to place a blade at his throat—symbolically administering to his corpse the four kinds of capital punishment that could be meted out by a Jewish court, as outlined in the Talmud. If he had even sinned in his thoughts at any time while in this world, he hoped this would expiate his transgressions before he came to be judged before the Heavenly Court. In addition, he instructed that two monuments be placed on his grave, one at the head and the other at the foot, both inscribed on the inner side so that the inscriptions would be facing each other. And these inscriptions, he warned, should not extol his righteousness, but simply say that he was the son of Reb Moshe, born of the woman Rivkah, and that he was a servant of God.

This servant of God and holy man of the two monuments had never wanted to become the Rav of Horadna, and he told his children that neither they nor their children should seek high clerical office. In time this proved impossible, however, and before long these admonitions against high office were interpreted by his descendants as not including the rabbinate. His son, Aryeh, and his grandsons were already members of the Rabbinical Court of Horadna, and the position passed on to Alexander Ziskind's great-grandson Reb Yitzhak-Isaac, son of Reb Shmuel Sender. With the passing generations, the family married into the most eminent rabbinical families of Lithuanian Jewry and even wove their way into the Hasidic dynasties of Wolyn and

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Karlin. Only Sarah-Rivkah's mother, the old Horadna Rebbetzin, had come from humble beginnings. Her father, a wealthy village merchant, had married off his daughter to the great-grandson of the venerated author of *The Foundation and Principles of Prayer* by offering a huge dowry.

For as long as Sarah-Rivkah could remember, her father's house had always bustled with her rabbinical uncles, who traveled to Horadna to buy books or to have their own books published, or with her rebbetzin aunts, who came to see doctors or to have new clothes made by the big-city dressmakers. Her father often traveled to attend the funerals of relatives who had been rabbis or famous scholars, and Sarah-Rivkah and her mother went with her father to weddings. The Rav of Suprasl might be marrying a son. Another time the Rav of Tyktin, a distant cousin through Reb Shmuel Sender, married off a daughter. At each wedding the bride and groom were cousins on both their fathers' and their mothers' sides.

Blumele, the old Horadna Rebbetzin of humble origins, now trapped within this aristocratic rabbinical family, complained to her daughter, Sarah-Rivkah: "For heaven's sake, why can't one find in your father's family at least one ordinary Jew, a common laborer or shopkeeper? They're all rabbis and rabbis, like a dynasty of kings. So where are the plain soldiers, the simple, honest Jews? Being always surrounded by such aristocrats, one can become very conceited."

The old rebbetzin was not alone—even her husband, Reb Yitzhak-Isaac, harbored a grievance against his father and grandfather for having made their livelihoods as rabbis and for preparing him only for the rabbinate. "Our Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were shepherds, and our own great-grandfather, the saintly Rabbi Alexander Ziskind, wouldn't hear of becoming the head of the Rabbinical Court. Why was it decreed that I should have to deal with an entire city of congregants when all I really wanted was to be a carpenter, just a simple carpenter?" he sufferingly lamented to his wife and daughter. When he said this, he looked like a child, a schoolboy whining that he just can't manage to carry a huge log on his weak shoulders. Reb Yitzhak-Isaac was a small man with thick sidelocks and clean, smooth cheeks where no beard grew. Only on his chin did a small, stark beard barely hang. He had kind, tearful eyes and a pair of delicately pious hands fit for leafing through books, for writing complex responsa, or for feeling the gizzard of a chicken in which a housewife had found a splinter, to determine if it was still kosher.

"But, Father, how could you have lifted those heavy boards, or driven nails with a heavy hammer, or carried a heavy chest on your shoulders?" Sarah-Rivkah laughed, as her mother, Blumele, the old Horadna Rebbetzin with her high cheekbones, smiled sadly.

"And why couldn't I? I certainly could," Reb Yitzhak-Isaac said, vexatiously tugging at his narrow gray beard. He told his wife and daughter of the men of the Talmud who were cobblers and blacksmiths, and about Reb Mordkele of Pokrow, who was a Rav as well as a carpenter. "Now, there was an extraordinary man, that Reb Mordkele! He was the greatest saint of all the countless humble saints in Zamut. He lived during the time of the Vilna Gaon, who delighted in him. Reb Mordkele surely lived by the words of the sages: 'Love work and eschew the pulpit.' And what about our own Rabbi Akiva Eiger? The whole world lives off his brilliance, yet here he is, the Poznan Rav, asking one of his students in a small town if there is perhaps an opening there for a sexton in a small synagogue. So why couldn't I be a worker?" Yitzhak-Isaac asked his wife and daughter. These words never left the innermost chambers of the Rav's house; no carpenter in Horadna could have imagined that he was the object of the Rav's envy. To all appearances, Reb Yitzhak-Isaac was quite satisfied with his lot, and his family realized full well that outsiders must not know anything about the Rav's dreams.

THE sprawling family of the venerable Horadna Sage, the author of *The Principles*, had become a dense primordial forest. With the passage of generations and the inevitable bolts of lightning, the great oaks are broken, the tall pines are twisted, and pieces of bark lie beside the smoothed trunks that look like forlorn, ragged, old people. Instead of fresh green grass, a silvery moss spreads out and blankets the dried creeping vines. At the same time, at the edge of the forest the fresh saplings of the nut trees, alders, and birch trees already rustle. Their bark sparkles with a dark silver luster as they whisper confidences to the centuries-old trees, their stately ancestors in the impenetrable thicket. Yet even the sun never reaches the inner sanctum of this wood. A tranquility reigns there, a hush and a darkness even at noonday. So did the family of Rabbi Alexander Ziskind grow and proliferate while the main trunk, his children and grandchildren, shriveled. Sarah-Rivkah was an only daughter of Reb Yitzhak-Isaac, just as he was the only son of Reb Shmuel Sender. Sarah-Rivkah grew up pale and sickly, as if she were paying the price for her saintly great-grandfather's fasting and asceticism. An anemic girl, this rabbi's daughter was fatigued by her formidable ancestry, which burdened her like a train of night shadows. In her quiet smile one saw the last faint glimmer of a faded, ancient tapestry. Just as her father complained to her that he should have become a carpenter, her mother constantly grumbled to her as well.

"At my wedding I dreamed of having a half-dozen healthy, bouncing children like my country brothers and sisters, and as I myself looked as a young girl. Even your father hoped you'd take after my family instead of his. But your great-grandfather, the Tzaddik of the Two Monuments, looked

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down from the heavens and decreed that you should look like one of his own, who consider even laughing out loud a transgression."

Nevertheless, the old rebbetzin, Blumele, agreed with her husband that their only daughter must marry a great Torah scholar. And Sarah-Rivkah's groom was indeed a flaming genius, descended from generations of brilliant scholars who turned the pages of the Talmud as easily as the wind turns the leaves in the forest. The rabbis of the Eisenstadt family had steadily ascended to higher and higher positions, like the High Priest who would use progressively bigger vessels during the Temple service on the Day of Atonement. A Hasid could no more be found among them than could a piece of leavened bread in their homes during Passover. Plain, pious Jews and all sorts of miracle-workers they would dismiss with a wave of the hand, and they looked down upon preachers for the common people. They would rush through prayers, the sooner to sit down and study. The Eisenstadts knew nothing of retreat or compromise. When they issued a decree or even just expressed an opinion, everyone had to bow down to their wishes.

"Your Moshe-Mordecai will conduct the Horadna rabbinate with an iron hand," Reb Yitzhak-Isaac said prophetically to his daughter. "He has inherited from his fathers the strength and the authority to govern a city, a state, even the whole world. Anyway, you won't find him throwing himself about with a yearning to become a carpenter."

Reb Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt was in fact a gentle person, and one could have even called him witty. "It's because your husband is very bright, and because the times are different, that he knows how to conceal the arrogance for which his family is famous," Reb Yitzhak-Isaac told his daughter.

While yet a young wife Sarah-Rivkah asked her husband why he had broken off his engagement to the Staropol Rav's daughter. "Was it because you wanted a lamb for a wife?" she would ask teasingly. "You're cleverer than she," he answered, adding that in his family the women were women, not men. A Rav's wife has to know how to get along with people and be friendly to guests and not mix in communal matters. But the Staropol Rav's daughter would have been the kind who hides under the Rav's prayer shawl and prompts his every move. In the end, the people lose all respect for such a Rav and call him "our worthy rebbetzin's husband."

Reb Yitzhak-Isaac had lived to see Sarah-Rivkah's first miscarriage before joining his sainted ancestors. Her mother suffered through a few years more with her daughter yearning for a child in the face of the doctor's warning that another pregnancy would be dangerous. When Sarah-Rivkah at last gave birth to a baby girl, they named her Blumele after the old rebbetzin who had died just before the baby was born, as if Heaven had called her away in order to spare her the grief of seeing how sickly was her only grandchild.

Throughout all her seventeen years of life, Blumele was almost always either crying or suddenly screaming because of her asthma, until even her father was utterly broken. In his own mind, Reb Moshe-Mordecai made peace with his lot, resigning himself to a life very different from that of his ancestors. True, he had become the outstanding scholar of his day, famous the world over, but he seemed to merit no personal joy or peace from the Almighty.

As for Sarah-Rivkah, her unending anxiety over her daughter utterly exhausted her; and she would constantly plead with her husband to be lenient in his decisions, even when the very authority of the Torah was being challenged. Even after their daughter had been torn away from them, she would beg him to give way to his opponents, as in the case of the Graipewo Rav. At long last, she succeeded in extracting from Moshe-Mordecai a promise that not only would he not object, but would do his utmost to persuade the other rabbis to accept the Graipewo Rav on the Horadna Rabbinical Court.

10.

THE RAINS fell steadily until late in the fall, and then the ground became icy with the first frosts. In his rabbinic winter attire, a long fur coat and a tall fur hat, Rabbi Koenigsberg presented a splendid and stately appearance; he radiated dignity and confidence over the town.

It was only in the chambers of the Rabbinical Court that he sat on pins and needles. There his colleagues either suffocated him with their hostile silence or addressed him in tones of anger. When the court adjudicated minor cases or ruled on matters of ritual law, it convened without the town's Rav, in a small room maintained by the kehillah. When an important case arose, however, the judges gathered in the Rav's home. Although Rabbi Eisenstadt was less obvious about it than the others, it was clear that he, too, was keeping his distance from the court's new member.

One Thursday, around noon, the court was in session and the rabbis were seated with the Rav. Rabbi Koenigsberg gazed through the window at the darkening gray sky and watched a flurry of snowflakes dancing gaily through the air, trying to decide where to alight. The snow grew thicker every minute, transformed before his very eyes from thin, wispy ribbons into white sheets and swirling linen canvases. Reb Uri-Zvi recalled how on such winter mornings in Graipewo he would walk to the early morning services, met by every passerby's warm good-morning. After the services the men would sit with him around a table and study Mishnah, eager to hear some profound insight of Torah. Afterward he went home and had his breakfast, then sat down in his study to read, and later lay down to rest. When he arose, a man would come for some advice or a housewife for a ruling in some ritual matter. They all showed

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him the greatest respect and love—he was the Rav, the shepherd watching over his flock. But what was he now?

The case now before them would at any other time have been considered trivial; but the other members of the court were apparently prepared to seize every opportunity to embarrass the Graipewo Rav. The trustees of the Stone Synagogue were planning a Hanukkah concert. Besides the town's cantor and his choir leading the services for the lighting of the menorah, an orchestra was to perform, followed by a sermon on the Hasmoneans to be delivered by Rabbi Koenigsberg. The plan called for selling tickets, which would bring in a great deal of money, half of which was to go to the synagogue and the other half to the Orthodox community in the Land of Israel.

"I know from experience that at the lighting of Hanukkah candles with musicians, men and women will be crowded together. Such anarchy should not be permitted. We must declare it forbidden!" the Wolkowysk Street Rabbi argued vehemently.

"They can't fool me. The money will fall into Mizrachi's coffers," the Schloss Street Rabbi declared with great assurance. "None of it will go to the synagogue or to the poor pious Jews in the Land of Israel."

"Musicians, like at a peasant wedding? That's an abomination of the Gentiles!" cried the Old Marketplace Rabbi, boiling over in outrage.

Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt sat at the head of the table, half stooped over, his fingers fidgeting with his beard as if he were looking for some clever way out. "Perhaps the trustees could be made to understand how important it is that men and women not sit together. The musicians and choir really ought not to concern us very much. Our main concern should be that people not forget the miracle of Hanukkah and think that Judah the Maccabee was victorious through his own strength."

By this Rabbi Eisenstadt meant to hint strongly to Rabbi Koenigsberg that he feared the Graipewo Rav was planning to speak on a Zionist theme instead of emphasizing the Providential aspects of the miracle. The other rabbis, however, found this much too tame a rebuke, and this time they told the Rav that, with all due respect, he was making a big mistake. The trustees of the Stone Synagogue would never be able to ensure separate seating for men and women, especially since they really wanted the opposite: mixed seating would guarantee a bigger crowd. Thereupon the Wolkowysk Street Rabbi turned to Rabbi Koenigsberg and pointed a finger menacingly at him. "Your congregants have placed you in charge in order to get permission for something clearly prohibited and which they never before had the nerve to do."

Dazed by this open display of hostility, Rabbi Koenigsberg mumbled something that no one could make out. Just then Rabbi Eisenstadt's wife entered the court chamber. Her gaunt, pale face looked even paler against the snow that was falling outside. With both hands she was carrying a tray laden with glasses of tea, sweet, dry cookies, ground sugar in a porcelain bowl, and slices of lemon on saucers. Sarah-Rivkah placed the refreshments on the table and said to the Graipewo Rav—a bit too loudly, it seemed—"Have some tea." And then, turning to the others, "And you, too, please. Your mouths must be dry from all that screaming and shouting."

The rabbis gaped at the Rav and he at his wife. This was the first time since her daughter's death that Sarah-Rivkah had set foot in the court chamber when the rabbis were there—and she was even bringing refreshments. The Rav quickly surmised that she wished to silence the tirade being launched against Rabbi Koenigsberg.

"Drink, Rabbis. Please have some tea. Let's all have some tea, and don't forget the cake," the Rav said cheerfully to his guests.

The rabbis muttered a blessing, spread apart their mustaches with their fingers, and sipped tea as they chewed the hard, crumbling cookies. Sarah-Rivkah remained standing beside the table and spoke in an excessively loud voice about Henka Lapidus, the wife of Reb Hayyim-Yonah, the ritual slaughterer in Graipewo. Henka, she said, had been her friend since childhood, and on a visit a couple of days earlier had told her that Graipewo really missed their former Rav: no matter who applied for the position, they couldn't seem to find a satisfactory replacement. They said they would like a Rav just like the Rabbi Uri-Zvi Ha-Kohen Koenigsberg.

"I would really like to meet your rebbetzin," Sarah-Rivkah said and looked innocently at her husband, as if unaware of his motioning for her to leave. Not until some people entered the court chamber on other business, and she could be certain that the rabbis would not return to their previous argument in the presence of laymen, did Sarah-Rivkah leave the room.

At dusk the Horadna Rebbetzin looked from her bedroom window at the thick snow falling outside, and with a frozen smile listened to her enraged husband's complaint. What was the meaning of this—coming in and purposely disrupting the deliberations of the rabbis? She'd never done that before!

Sarah-Rivkah sat motionless, her pale hands on her lap, her gaze fixed on the scene outside the window. "You must see to it," she replied, "that your colleagues don't embarrass the Graipewo Rav. To me, he's a much finer man than any of them."

This vexed the Rav even more. "How could you tell him you'd be happy to meet his wife? It's not nice, it's not proper."

Sarah-Rivkah just smiled and answered in a weary voice, "I'm not all that eager to meet her. But what's not proper about it? Rabbi Koenigsberg was never engaged to me as his wife was once to you."

This quiet answer addled Reb Moshe-Mordecai

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completely, and he could only murmur into his beard that he hadn't the time to stand guard and protect the Graipewo Rav from insult. He had much studying to do and hundreds of letters to answer. Since they had lost their Blumele, he hadn't written a single word of Talmudic analysis and had made no progress at all in completing his book.

Sarah-Rivkah angrily turned her head toward her husband, and her eyes shone with eerie derision and cold melancholy. "It's really a wonder that because of your one and only daughter's death you haven't finished your sixth book—or is it your seventh?"

Reb Moshe-Mordecai, still hunched over, was dumbfounded and regarded his wife fearfully. Sarah-Rivkah's high cheekbones quivered violently, but she steeled herself to speak calmly. Her father had managed not to write any books at all. Of course, Rabbi Eisenstadt was certainly a more famous scholar than her father—so what of it? Books were not children.... At that Sarah-Rivkah also fell silent. She peered out through the window and thought that this was the first snow to fall on Blumele's grave—Blumele's wedding veil.

"DON'T GO to the court anymore, or to the Rav's house!" Perele shouted at her husband that same night after he told her what he had to put up with from the other rabbis, and that only the Horadna Rebbetzin was friendly toward him. "Don't you dare set foot in the Rav's house, do you hear? The Horadna Rebbetzin is polite to him, and this fool repeats it yet."

Reb Uri-Zvi stood lamely before his wife, his hands hanging heavily at his sides, his beard disheveled. He was totally bewildered by his wife's fury; Perele seemed to be standing on her toes so she could yell louder. Reb Uri-Zvi pleaded with her. What did she want of him? She had schemed and plotted to make him a member of the Horadna Rabbinical Court. Now, how could he continue to accept a salary for sitting on the court if he refused to go there, especially when they met in the Rav's house? His critics were already complaining that he was getting a double salary, first as a rabbinical judge and then as rabbi at the Stone Synagogue.

Perele's face blanched from anger and her lips became parched as if she were in a desert. She scoffed at her foolish husband's worries about what people were saying, especially since everyone knew that the other rabbis on the court were making two and three times as much as he at their other positions—even ten times as much. The other judges would be more than happy to send him his salary at home if only he'd promise not to come to the court. They had seated him, after all, gritting their teeth because they'd had no choice but to accept him. True, she had wanted him to have the title "judge" so that the other rabbis' wives could not flaunt their husbands' positions at her. But she had never intended that he should go running to the Horadna Rav's house where the Rav would lord it over him and the Horadna Rebbetzin could do him a favor and be friendly to him. She deserved a pinch on her cheek for that, didn't she?

Reb Uri-Zvi reminded his unpredictable wife that it had been her idea that he visit Rabbi Eisenstadt in the first place. And why was she so furious with Reb Moshe-Mordecai's wife? "After all, she specifically said she'd like to meet you."

Perele bristled anew and sarcastically replied, "Oh, really? She would like to meet me, would she? Perhaps she thinks that just as you don't know how to thank her enough for being friendly, she's also doing me a favor." Reb Uri-Zvi listened, mesmerized, for a long time, until he suddenly waved his hand and went away to his books. He had never come across a single passage of the Talmud with as much confusion or as many contradictions as the words and deeds of his wife.

Perele now went about her housework in the same manner as once in Graipewo, when she had succeeded in convincing her husband to move out of that town. She cooked supper and set the table, all the while talking to herself aloud: "He wants to have it all. He has grabbed everything, that Reb Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. He's the Rav of Horadna and sits at the head of the Rabbinical Court. He's the leader of the Agudahniks and yeshivahs in Lithuania. When they send money from America for the yeshivahs or for the poor of Horadna, it's up to him alone to decide who gets what. When rabbis and solicitors come to Horadna, they have to pay him the first visit, that 'Jewish Pope,' as the women call him. He writes books, has them published immediately, and is already selling them, while my husband has been writing all his life, struggles to get his one and only book ready to be published—and still isn't close to finishing it."

11.

IT ALL happened exactly as Perele had predicted. Although Rabbi Koenigsberg no longer showed his face in the Rabbinical Court, they sent him his salary with the sexton, yet breathed not a word about his returning. At first he was greatly distressed, but then he came to see this as a fortunate development. It would give him more time to study and to prepare his sermons. Perele, however, twisted her mouth bitterly as she realized that her words had come to pass and that the Horadna Court could get along very well without her husband. She relieved her anger in heaving long sighs and finally seized upon the consolation that she had, after all, moved to Horadna to be near the children, God bless them. So she began visiting her daughter more often.

It was simply not in Perele's character, however, to play the role of the kindly old grandma bringing treats for the grandchildren; she wanted to help her Serel run the house. By nature a metic-

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ulous and orderly woman, Perele was pained to see the house become even more of a dump after her daughter had yet one more child. Everything was thrown about, rumpled and overturned; underwear hung out of dresser drawers, clothes were stuffed into the closets, and linens were strewn all over the beds. The foyer floor was muddied by the slush trodden in from outside. Serel, an infant at her breast, went about in a loose housecoat, her hair disheveled and uncovered. The twins either wandered aimlessly from room to room getting filthier and hungrier, or else they'd wrestle, tweaking each other's noses and whimpering. At the last moment before her husband was due to come home from work, she'd pause to decide what to start cooking for his dinner.

Perele could hardly believe her eyes as she sat at the table. The twins were so identical that even she, their own grandmother, would get them confused. Yet each one did all he could to spite the other. If one wanted to eat dairy, the other demanded only meat. Serel screamed at them while her husband sat at the table either laughing at it all or reading a newspaper, hearing and seeing nothing of what was going on around him. Perele asked her daughter why she didn't hire a maid, and although her mother had asked quietly and sweetly, Serel shouted her reply.

"I can't stand being helped by strangers—or by my own family either! I hate it when someone does me a favor and then becomes my boss."

The rebbetzin kept still. In her rabbinical family a mother and daughter would never argue in front of the son-in-law. But another time, when they were alone in the house, Perele rebuked her daughter for her slovenly appearance. "Today's women dress up for strange men," she said, "but for their own husbands they'll walk around in housecoats until the husbands come to detest them. You are a rabbi's daughter; did you ever see such things in your father's house? How can a man love his wife if he comes home for dinner and finds the children squirming on the floor like piglets in the mud?" The mother had much more to say, but the daughter interrupted her with a screech.

"Listen, you've already gnawed my father clean to the bone! Did you come here to gnaw at me, too?"

And when her husband came home at last, she greeted him, too, with a screech.

"Are you listening, Ezra? My mother was here today and she told me you don't love me."

Ezra Edelman knew that nothing could quiet his wife faster than telling her she was just like her mother. So this time, too, he sternly raised his finger and said, half seriously, half jokingly, "The more you argue with your mother, the more you prove that the two of you are alike—two sides of the very same coin." And to his mother-in-law he had once said, "Come on the Sabbath. Everything will look just the way you want it. Meanwhile, during the week we're busy people."

Perele was by now accustomed to hearing her son-in-law—with the sweet name of Edelman—speak to her in such a churlish manner. She knew that if she answered him as he deserved, he would tell her that she could play the boss in her husband's home but not in his, and Serel would surely side with him. So Perele bit her lip and decided that she would not set foot in her daughter's house again. Serel was already teaching the twins to have no respect for their grandmother. Her sons would remain her only comfort in life; both Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah had always shown great respect for their mother.

WINTER set in with a thick, dry snow that fell so steadily it seemed as if a heavenly mill were pouring flour on the city. On the third morning a gray light seeped through the thinning cover of clouds. Around midday a pale blue patch could be seen in the sky out of which stared a brassy, wall-eyed sun. In the evening a frost struck the land and covered the pure white snow with a frozen gleam. The next day the people in the street had to walk in small, careful steps so as not to slip on the ice. Days like these were the very busiest part of the winter season in the Koenigsberg brothers' shoe store. The two proprietors, with their exquisite silken beards and delicate white hands, waited on customers along with their salesmen. They hadn't even time to go home for lunch. Just at that time an unexpected guest appeared: their mother. She strolled in, bedecked like an in-law at a lavish old-fashioned wedding, wearing a worn, fitted sealskin coat with a stiff, upturned collar and broad, flat lapels, over a long, flowing dress with many pleats. Her hands were concealed in a muff, also of black sealskin. She went directly behind the cashier's counter and stood next to the safe, contemplating her sons' business.

The salesmen bounded demonlike up to the high shelves, seized the white cardboard shoe boxes, leaped to the floor, and then knelt down to fit the shoes on the customers sitting before them on chairs and benches. There were fat old women in thick fur coats buying overshoes; young women, looking like stretched and twisted springs, were trying on tall, narrow, fashionable boots. The owners, the Koenigsberg brothers, didn't rest for a moment; both were attending male customers. The older men were purchasing high rubber galoshes, while the young men were fitting low-cut half-rubbers with a red lining that came all the way from Riga. The elder brother, Yankel-Dovid, was bustling about two small boys who were holding up their feet stiffly in knitted socks of heavy red wool. Nearby sat their mother, a thin, freckled woman with a sour face that bespoke a morning spent arguing with her husband. No matter which shoes Yankel-Dovid put on their feet, she would reject them in disgust.

"So it's for this that Yankel-Dovid spent years studying in the yeshivah?" Perele said to herself. Then she turned to watch her younger son.

Gedaliah had earlier attended to a wizened old

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man, beardless and without a tooth in his mouth. He had wanted a pair of heavy, warm slippers in which he could step outside for a moment. A little later Gedaliah had tried to satisfy a tall, burly young man who sat in a waist-length coat, his hands as big as shovels resting on his knees, and his head, sporting a thick shock of hair, hatless even now in the dead of winter. The fellow wanted some sport shoes with double soles. The shopkeeper knelt before the customer's huge feet, but whatever he was shown he tossed aside. He rejected one pair because they were tied with leather laces; he wanted sport shoes with claps and straps. Another pair was waved away because he didn't care for the pattern of the soles, and besides, the edges were too smooth and the soles didn't have grooves for ice-skates. "And it is this village boor with a horse's mane who must be waited on by my Gedaliah, son of the Graipewo Rav and grandson of the Staropol Rav?"

Finally, both brothers managed to free themselves from their customers for a while and came over to their mother, exhausted but with faces beaming over their brisk business. They spoke quietly and respectfully, as always. Did Mother have anything particular on her mind, or was she just paying them a visit? Perele replied that she had come to take pride in her sons. "Some pride! Both of you crawling on all fours before such riff-raff, who yet have the nerve to complain." The brothers moved closer to their mother and spoke more quietly so no one else could hear: "And would it be better, Mother, for the shoe leather to dry up on the shelf?" They were happy that customers came in and let themselves be waited on.

Perele did not want to turn against her daughters-in-law, but she just couldn't let a flaw go unmentioned. "And why don't your wives come down to help you in the business? Seems to me they think it beneath them. They must feel they come from finer families than the two of you."

The brothers answered in barely restrained anger that their wives had more than enough work in the house and in taking care of the children—and there was nothing shameful about selling shoes. "A Rav is at the mercy of his congregants, but we tremble before no customer, even if we do kneel at his feet to try on his shoes." Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah went back to their customers and did not return to their mother. She stood there like a surly old woman who had come in so often to haggle over a pair of slippers that the salesmen had learned to ignore her. Not until she went toward the door did the brothers suddenly appear at her side to see her out respectfully. But she said nothing. She walked out in a huff, her head tilted back.

The rebbetzin returned home with her face drawn and determined, and found her husband at his desk, swaying over an open Talmud. Rabbi Koenigsberg was sitting in his old, long green knitted robe, his flat velvet yarmulke atop disheveled tufts of white hair, looking just as he always had in Graipewo. He didn't ask Perele where she'd been, nor did he get up from his chair to help her take off her coat. This was how he had always been, Perele thought, and when children had seen this since their youth, was it any wonder they had no respect for their mother? She looked about the room and suddenly noticed that not one piece of furniture was in the right place.

"Help me move the sofa between those two windows and the chest to where the sofa is now," she ordered her husband.

"Why, all of a sudden?" a bewildered Reb Uri-Zvi asked.

His wife shouted back at him. "Regards from your daughter. Her house is also the town dump and she doesn't even know it."

Perele was seething, but she still insisted on doing things in the proper order. She went to the bedroom, took off her fancy clothes, and put on a housedress. Reb Uri-Zvi crouched down to grab hold of the sofa while Perele pushed it from behind. He had taken off his robe and stood panting in his tallith kattan. Then he tried to pry the chest, its drawers filled with clothes, away from the wall. "This is a job for movers, not for old people like us," he said as he wiped the sweat from his forehead.

"If we just use our heads it won't be difficult," Perele snapped back. " 'Where there's Torah, there's widsom,' " as though she didn't deem her husband to be a Torah scholar either. With teeth-clenched stubbornness, she single-handedly pushed the chest from against the wall until it stood in the middle of the room and she was out of breath.

"In Graipewo the furniture stood for twenty-five years in the same place and looked fine, as if it had grown there. Here everything looks like wooden counters thrown about a marketplace after a fair; the furniture sticks out like logs," Perele said, casting disgusted looks about the room. "And how do things look in the Horadna Rebbetzin's home? What kind of furniture does she have?"

"I don't know, I really didn't notice," Reb Uri-Zvi panted, sitting down exhausted. "We're going to have to get someone to finish arranging the furniture the way you want."

Perele, beside herself, yelled at her husband. He'd been to meetings at the Horadna Rav's home countless times and come back with a beard full of barbs and insults from the other judges. He'd drunk tea and eaten cake there until he was overcome by the rebbetzin's hospitality. Had he really not noticed what kind of furniture she had? "What are you? Are you blind, are you deaf . . . or both?"

"I'm just no expert on such things," Reb Uri-Zvi stammered.

His lame answer only enraged Perele more. Standing among the displaced furniture, she pointed an accusing finger at her husband, blaming him for their children's lack of respect for her.

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It was his fault that they cared as much for her wishes as for last week's leftovers. And if he ever did warn Serel that she must mind her mother, he did it so halfheartedly that the daughter understood her father secretly sided with her. He had never encouraged his sons to aspire to a position in life befitting a Rav's children. He cared not a whit that Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah had become shoe salesmen, any more than he had been troubled about wasting his life as the Rav in a town no bigger than a fig . . . or any more than he was bothered now that he was nothing more than a maggid. The more his wife berated him, the lower Reb Uri-Zvi's head fell and the deeper was his silence. He had long known that no one is more brazen to a rabbi than his own rebbetzin. But as he listened, he wondered about something else: Perele had always been wise and always so very logical. Then what on earth, he asked himself, did moving the furniture have to do with their children or his position?

12.

IN THE major Jewish dailies in Warsaw it was reported that a delegation of Orthodox professors, rabieners, and community leaders from Hamburg, Frankfurt-am-Main, Amsterdam, and Brussels had come to Poland. Some time later these same Warsaw papers reported that, having visited several Hasidic enclaves and Lithuanian yeshivahs, this delegation from distant Orthodox communities planned to visit the great Rav of Horadna, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. The newspaper that published a Sabbath supplement sent reporters to Horadna on the nine o'clock train Friday morning, and it was no more than a few hours before the entire town was abuzz with the news. People talked of nothing else Friday night in their homes or Saturday in the synagogues. "So Rabbi Eisenstadt is the 'Jewish Pope' after all, just as they say." The people felt proud and important because the leader of world Jewry, to whom such learned dignitaries came for an audience, was also their Rav. Word had gotten out that when the guests were to meet Rabbi Eisenstadt, only his closest associates and the Rabbinical Court would be invited to attend.

They talked about this in the Stone Synagogue as well, but Rabbi Uri-Zvi Koenigsberg, the preacher of the synagogue, was not the least bit enthralled by this event. Though he was still officially a member of the Rabbinical Court, he in fact no longer met with the other rabbis and so knew full well that he would not be invited to the reception for the visiting dignitaries. On that particular Sabbath morning—the Sabbath of the Blessing of the New Moon for the month of Shevat—Perele had come to services. The women around her in the balcony could not stop chattering about the pious foreign professors coming to visit the Horadna Rav, and Perele listened with a stiff smile on her face. "It is an honor to the Torah. I'd like to see the Warsaw papers that are going to write this up," she said loudly, and several women promised her they would bring her a copy when they were finished with it. Later, at dinner, while the distracted and despondent Reb Uri-Zvi forced down his bowl of cholent, an enraged Perele, her food getting cold on the plate, turned the pages of the newspaper so violently that she seemed to have forgotten it was the Sabbath, and nearly tore it all up. She finally took a bit of food in her mouth and almost choked on it, coughing and rasping.

"The evil one must have talked me into moving to Horadna to be with the children. I have as much joy from my children as I have respect and honor from my husband." On the first two days of the following week a hard snow fell, thick as hail. On Tuesday the grainy snow settled on the ground, squeaking underfoot and sparkling like crystal. By Thursday a blinding sun emerged, igniting the icicles dangling from the eaves of roofs, and the frost-covered windows sparkled with tears and diamonds. The townspeople stopped to gape at the evergreens in front of the church; they seemed even greener under a mantle of snow than they did in the middle of summer. Somewhere, someone laughed and the laughter drifted out over this frozen world of snow like the ring of silver chimes. Perele went to the butcher to buy meat for the Sabbath. The butcher's wife was telling a group of women that even the weather was trying to improve in honor of the pious scholars who were coming to Horadna for the Sabbath. It was as if the Almighty wanted to do something to console the Rav and Sarah-Rivkah for the loss of their daughter, so he sent them these exalted guests.

The women encircled Perele and spoke to her as if she were the mother of the bride at a grand wedding. "Rebbetzin, is it true that the Horadna Rebbetzin Sarah-Rivkah hired a caterer to serve the meals to the pious professors and rabieners?" "It's true," Perele answered, though this was the first she had heard of it. "Rebbetzin, is it true that the younger men of the foreign delegation kiss our Rav's hand because that is their custom back home?" "True," answered Perele in a voice as dry as pepper. The butcher's wife had a question, too: Was it true that on the Sabbath after the afternoon prayer one of the Rabieners was going to speak in the Grand Synagogue? The Graipewo Rebbetzin ought to know; her husband was, after all, the maggid in the Stone Synagogue.

"I couldn't say, my husband said nothing to me about it. And how would the people of Horadna be able to understand the Rabiener anyway? He speaks only German," Perele wondered aloud and then asked the butcher's wife to weigh her order of meat. The odor of the butcher shop was making her sick; she was beginning to feel nausea. "And my husband is not just the maggid in the Stone Synagogue; my husband is the Rav of that synagogue. A butcher who sells kosher meat that

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is supervised by rabbis ought to know the difference between a maggid and a Rav."

The butcher's wife, holding her meat cleaver over the side of beef before her, said she knew only that the rebbetzin's husband had been the Rav in Graipewo, but in Horadna the Rav was Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. On the way home, her basket in hand, Perele let her anger break out in a sharp, quiet, bitter laugh that sputtered out like pebbles cast aside by footfalls. What a fine turn of events! In Graipewo they had sent the best cuts of meat right to her home, but here she had to wait in line in the butcher shop with all those yentes.

When Perele arrived at the house, she immediately reported the news to her husband: "Did you hear? The Horadna Rebbetzin, Sarah-Rivkah, has hired a caterer to serve her guests marzipan. Why, it's barely a year since their daughter passed away and she's already throwing parties." Perele tugged at her clothes and placed her hands on her hips, as if she were even uncertain whether her underwear was in place. "Seems like the Horadna Rav really does think he's the Jewish Pope —he even lets those German professors kiss his hand." She then turned suddenly toward her husband and yelled at him. "But you . . . they didn't invite you to the reception, did they?"

"How could Reb Moshe-Mordecai have invited me after you turned over heaven and earth so that I wouldn't go to the court sessions or to his home anymore?" Reb Uri-Zvi yelled back at her, and Perele could hear in the yelling his anguish at his being an outcast to the rabbis of Horadna. "There'll be no sermon this Sabbath. Everyone's going to the Grand Synagogue to hear the Rabiener, and I'm going too."

The little rebbetzin didn't yell anymore; she drew herself up to her full height, stood motionless, her hands clenched in fists at her sides, and spoke through gnashing teeth in a voice that was barely audible: "Don't you dare go! Now, if you don't go, people will think that you were not invited because you are too important a member of the opposition. If you do go and crowd yourself into the Grand Synagogue to hear the sermon, you'll be making a nothing of yourself." Rabbi Koenigsberg heaved a heavy sigh and did not reply. He still believed his wife was shrewder than he and knew better how to protect his dignity. On that Saturday night he realized that by not going he would avoid shame and humiliation.

He had not yet had a chance to say the Sabbath closing prayer when his door flew open and in burst his synagogue's three trustees, in an uproar. "A good week to you, Rabbi! Rabbi, it's an outrage! We must not keep silent!" They turned on the lights and sat down around the table as Meir-Michael Jaffe, his gold teeth flashing, began to relate what they had just seen in the mobbed Grand Synagogue. "Up front sat the Horadna Rav, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt, his colleagues, and the delegation, while their Rabiener stood in front of the Ark and spoke. He stood as stiff as a statue, and he didn't speak in German, but in a thick, garbled Yiddish—he's probably from Galicia, or he may even be a fanatic from Hungary. Fire and brimstone spewed out of his mouth—against believing Jews who throw in their lot with the settlers, the halutzim, who are rebuilding the Land of Israel. 'The Jews of my congregation, Adath Yeshurun,' he said, 'will have nothing to do with the reformers in the temples. Even though the reformers claim to believe in God, they've shortened the prayer book, and men and women sit together. But imagine, even in Horadna, where the Rav is also the leader of the religious Jews of the world'—those were his exact words—'in Horadna, where the Rav is also the leader of the religious Jews of the world, in the very town of the Gaon, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Ha-Levi Eisenstadt, there are Jews who want to rebuild the Land of Israel together with those Zionist atheists. But we know from the Torah that the Holy Land spits out sinners.' And then this preacher started talking about this week's reading from the Prophets—how much Jeremiah was tormented by the people, by the king and the princes, because he told the Jews of Jerusalem not to resist Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, and because he wrote to the Jews of Babylon that they should build houses, plant vineyards, and wait until the God of their fathers would lead them back to their land. For that they beat Jeremiah, imprisoned him, spat on him, and called him a traitor. 'And who was right?' he said, and he raised his voice and drew himself up. 'And who was right, Jeremiah or the false prophets?'

"You, Rabbi—it was you the Rabiener meant by 'false prophets,'" Meir-Michael said, sternly pointing a finger at Rabbi Koenigsberg. "He must have heard from the Rav's lackeys, or maybe even from the Rav himself, that you're always citing the Prophets to praise the Land of Israel. So he cited the Prophets to speak against you and against rebuilding the Land of Israel."

"Not only their Rabiener but that whole crowd of Germans are clean-shaven. They say there is a kind of paste that takes out the hair, and a Jew is permitted to use it," blurted out David Ganz with the long white beard, his eyes dark and bulging.

The third trustee, Moshe Moskowitz, a merchant of religious articles and seasoned matchmaker to rabbinical families, impatiently demanded silence with a quick wave of his hand. "All right, let's talk business! Rabbi, we've deliberated and we have decided: next week, on Sabbath afternoon, you are not going to speak in our synagogue; you're going to speak in the Grand Synagogue. And we want your words to cut like a knife. Tell them that rebuilding the Land of Israel is the greatest precept in the entire Torah and that those halutzim who are rebuilding Israel are our own flesh and blood, even if they are not observant Jews. That's what you should tell them!

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If the rabbis or those young freeloaders who run the Agudah are going to talk against the halutzim, there's going to be fire."

"I've always said that Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt is the Rav only of the local Agudahniks and not the Rav of all the Jews of Horadna," David Ganz stammered slowly, as if his mouth had suddenly been paralyzed.

"I said it even before you," declared little Moshe Moskowitz, cutting him off. "Those are my words exactly: Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt should come right out with it and admit that he supports the Agudah completely. So he can be the Horadna Rav of the Agudah and Rabbi Uri-Zvi Koenigsberg, the former Rav of Graipewo, can be the Rav of the Mizrachi of Horadna."

"We'll wage a holy war, Rabbi, to make you the Horadna Rav of the Mizrachi, just as Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt is the Rav of the Agudah," Meir-Michael Jaffe added loudly. "My God, how does anyone have the hutzpah to stand before the Ark of the Grand Synagogue and insult an entire city of Jews for not wanting to while away the exile rotting in Horadna, waiting for the Messiah? And his German bunch, these yekkes, nodding their heads like sheep. . . ."

"I don't understand why this comes as such a big surprise," Perele interposed liltingly, her face bright and cheerful. "The way I hear it, the Rabiener is from Brussels and the Jews there are all diamond merchants and aren't plagued with Jew-haters as we are here. They can very easily wait for the Messiah. . . . You must be hungry, gentlemen—come wash and have something to eat."

The men replied boisterously: of course they were hungry. They had, after all, been in the synagogue since early that afternoon. Perele brought some cold fish to the table, along with jellied calf's feet, noodle pudding, prune compote, and then went back to the kitchen to make some tea. Their mouths full and vigorously chewing, the trustees said that the Germans, those yekkes, would be leaving tomorrow morning. And during the coming week the Graipewo Rav's sermon in the Grand Synagogue next Sabbath—the Sabbath when the Song of the Sea is read from the Torah—would be the talk of Horadna. The synagogue would undoubtedly be packed, the trustees said triumphantly, and that would make the Agudahniks jump out of their skins. The trustees ground their teeth over this battle as one sharpens a knife on a fork, and mumbled again that by "false prophet" the Rabiener meant Rabbi Uri-Zvi Koenigsberg. From time to time they complimented the rebbetzin for her hospitality and praised her wisdom as they gulped down the food and sipped the hot tea. Then they rose in unison and stormed out as abruptly as they had arrived.

Not until then did Reb Uri-Zvi cast a pair of anxious eyes at his wife and sigh. How could he stand before the Ark and say that settling the Land of Israel was the great commandment of the Torah?

"You can say it and you must say it," Perele replied, standing challengingly in front of her husband with her hands on her hips. "Wait just a second! Which is mentioned more often in the Torah, phylacteries or the Land of Israel? As great a precept as phylacteries is, it's mentioned only a few times, but Israel is mentioned on every page of the Bible! Why do you look at me with your mouth open? I'm not saying anything out of my own head. I remember hearing a maggid tell my father this when I was a little girl. And if my father had no answer to this, then the Horadna Rav's lackeys will surely have nothing to say."

With that she went back into the kitchen to wash the dishes, muttering to herself. It would have never occurred to her simpleton of a husband to dare to preach a sermon in the Grand Synagogue and get supporters so that Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Ha-Levi Eisenstadt should not be the only Rav in Horadna.

13.

NEXT SABBATH, following the afternoon service, in the middle of Rabbi Koenigsberg's sermon before a packed audience in the Grand Synagogue, a voice rang out from the back: "The Graipewo Rav should be ashamed of himself even to suggest that Dr. Herzl and his gang of Zionists are sanctioned by the Torah!" The rabbi stopped speaking and stood stunned as the crowd turned to see who had interrupted the sermon. Then another voice called out: "The Talmud talks about a High Priest who in his old age became a Sadducee." And then a third voice: "It's an outrage that a Torah scholar should speak out against the Supreme Rabbinical Council." These outcries all came from a group of young men who had come to the synagogue for the sole purpose of heckling Rabbi Koenigsberg. The Mizrachi's insistence that Rabbi Koenigsberg speak in the Grand Synagogue the very next Sabbath after the German Rabiener had spoken against the Zionists had been taken by the Agudah people as a declaration of war.

The Mizrachi people were not about to take this quietly. "Cutthroats! Rabble-rousers!" stormed Meir-Michael Jaffe. "They should be thrown out like rotten herring!" roared David Ganz in such boisterous tones that only his shaking head betrayed his age. "The leaders of the Agudah instigated these rabble-rousers—they and the town's Rav, who thinks he is the Jewish Pope!" shouted Moshe Moskowitz. Upon hearing such insults thrown at their Rav, the great Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Ha-Levi Eisenstadt, his supporters shook their fists at Moshe Moskowitz, shrieking, "Heretic! You Jeroboam, you! Do you realize you are talking about the Rav of the whole Diaspora? Trample him! Squash him like a worm! I don't care if it is the Sabbath!" The two sides screamed at each other from opposite ends of the synagogue, with the throng separating them like the rapids of a wide, deep river.

For a time the crowd, perplexed and curious,

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looked on passively, not siding with either faction. But then, gradually, they began to lose patience with the hecklers. Their hearts went out to the Graipewo Rav as he stood dumbfounded before the Ark curtain, his disheveled white beard and yellowed face aglow with a deathly pallor. Compassion for him now fueled the crowd's anger against the zealots, these gluttonous, impudent, freeloading sons-in-law with their fat, bloated cheeks. Men on both sides of the Ark, old men with silken beards and stiff-brimmed hats sitting with their backs against the eastern wall, cried out in great indignation that they would not permit strangers to take over the synagogue. Peddlers and poor merchants who sat in the center pews in their tall fur hats and warm half-coats, their faces notched like stone from the winter frosts, seethed even more—they had enough arguing the rest of the week; on the Sabbath all they wanted was a little peace and a good sermon. From the back rows the voices of a hundred burly laborers shouting and waving their crooked, work-hewn fingers rose above the tumult: "Is this what they taught you in the yeshivah? That's what you call respect for an old rabbi? And you're supposed to be religious people! You should live so long!"

Raging most fiercely among the Agudahniks was one young man wearing a dandy's hat like a dandy, cocked to the side. With his brown fur-trimmed gloves and a white scarf beneath a black fur collar, he looked like a bridegroom on his honeymoon. His thick, parted lips revealed a full set of pointed teeth that flashed as he became more and more boisterous, and from his eyes, pointed as his teeth, darted a mischievous laugh. The people despised him instantly and yelled at him from all sides, "Just look at that fanatic, with his fur gloves! Throw him out, head first! Drag him out by his ears!" The people closest to the dandy started jostling him, pushing him toward the door, while his friends elbowed a path for themselves through the crowd. When the Agudahniks reached the door and were about to force their way out, they turned to the congregation and shouted in chorus: "Horadna is a condemned city!"

Some of the people hadn't heard and others hadn't understood, but those who had both heard and understood squared their shoulders and smacked their lips in outrage: "What a disgrace! A disgrace! To proclaim a Jewish city like Horadna condemned." The crowd turned to the dazed rabbi standing in front of the Ark and jarred him back to his senses: "Continue, Rabbi. Speak. Go on, we hear you. You are our maggid."

It was all Reb Uri-Zvi could do to keep from weeping before the entire crowd. He had no intention of uttering a single critical word against the Torah or the Sages. Why did he deserve to be publicly shamed like this, to be denounced as a Sadducee? He wanted desperately to end the sermon then and there; but abruptly he remembered Perele and realized that she would never forgive him if he didn't forge ahead—and this time she'd be right. Who could tell, perhaps the rabbinical judges had sent that wild mob of fanatics to heckle him, perhaps even with the knowledge of the Rav, Rabbi Eisenstadt himself. If that was the case, then he must stand his ground and prove that he, too, was a worthy rabbi. He pulled himself together and dived back into his sermon. But his speech was garbled and the people weren't listening anyway, they were talking heatedly among themselves and reviling the other rabbis: "Last week the town Rav and his whole Rabbinical Court came to hear the Rabiener from abroad, but they couldn't come to hear the Graipewo Rav because he's a thorn in their side."

THE CONTROVERSY spilled over into the deliberations of the kehillah and became the central issue at a meeting originally called for a totally different purpose.

For a long time the kehillah had grappled with the matter of setting up orphanages. Some kehillah members preferred to house both boys and girls in one building. The Orthodox members, however, wouldn't hear of it, insisting on separate buildings for males and females; and the Rav, Rabbi Eisenstadt, and his Rabbinical Court threatened to issue a ban on housing the children together under one roof.

At the meeting of the kehillah, the first to speak was the leader of the Horadna Zionists, a young halutz with a thick black shock of hair, his face sunburned as if already baked by the sun of the Promised Land. His deep voice carried a faint hint of song, the melody perhaps of a halutz folk dance: "On a kibbutz in the Land of Israel, boys and girls live together. Only Horadna is still medieval. The ministry of darkness still rules here. We should be getting the young people used to living together in a friendly atmosphere so they'll be ready to settle in the Land. . . . By all means," he concluded, "let the orphans all live in one house."

Although the curly-haired halutz leader cooed melodiously as he spoke, his bearded colleagues glared at him as if he were Satan incarnate spitting forth venom with every word. These venerable elders could not even speak the Yiddish of the day, let alone converse with those impudent young political people who prattled on about left wings and right wings, coalitions, fronts, and tactical maneuvers. The elders would sit and listen with half-embarrassed, half-mocking smiles as they thought back to a time when they had built orphanages with their own hands. They had actually brought the straw for the mattresses themselves, and gone round to all the housewives begging for Sabbath fish and hallah for the orphans, hired teachers to teach boys Hebrew and later sent them to artisans to learn a trade. Now here came these thugs, these politicians, demanding that the orphanages be combined and boys and girls be housed together. What was this world coming to?

Meir-Michael Jaffe, the trustee of the Stone Synagogue and a member of the kehillah, rose and

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asked for the floor. He spoke with assurance, buoyed by an awareness of the members of his synagogue and his party who had come to hear and support him. "Is it any wonder," he said emphatically, "that there isn't enough money to support separate orphanages when the Horadna Rav is unaware of the needs of the community? He's always busy with rabbis from all over Poland and with foreign Rabieners. He's simply too busy to find out what is going on in Horadna and get involved. Therefore, gentlemen, on behalf of the membership of Mizrachi and on behalf of all the unaffiliated Jews of Horadna who believe in the importance of harmony, I move that the former Graipewo Rav, Rabbi Uri-Zvi Ha-Kohen Koenigsberg, be made the Rav of Mizrachi and that Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Ha-Levi Eisenstadt remain as Rav of the Agudah of Horadna."

"Stick to the issue!" came angry shouts from every corner of the room. "We're talking about the orphanages. Should we combine them or not?"

"Mizrachi is opposed to combining the orphanages, but Mizrachi *is* in favor of dividing up the Horadna rabbinate," replied Meir-Michael Jaffe resolutely.

"And what if we do have a combined orphanage? Will you, Mr. Jaffe, not be able to spend your nights playing cards?" A member of the socialist Bund rose in protest. He had gray ringlets of hair on his head, stooped shoulders, and deep-set, dark eyes that flashed angrily. His hoarse voice reverberated like the growl of a lion. "The reactionaries," he proclaimed, "have taken over the Jewish community." And he described how the citizens of Horadna had supposedly cared for the orphans over the years. Each Thursday two orphans would accompany the sexton to the butcher shops, where they would have to beg for some discarded lungs or calves' feet for their Sabbath meals. At every funeral of some blood-sucking tycoon, orphans had to precede the coffin, crying out: "Righteousness shall precede the righteous!" All the orphans had to wear a uniform—a dark-brown coat and a hat with a little green band—so as to set them apart from other children. And if, God forbid, any orphan made a mistake or missed a service, he was beaten within an inch of his life. The craftsmen who took them on as apprentices made them do all the dirty housework and kept them toiling eighteen hours at a stretch.

The Bundist thundered long against those fine Jews of Horadna who required two rabbis and two orphanages. Finally, he made a motion:

"The Bund is the only party in the community that cares enough to provide the poor with firewood for the winter. In the name of the socialists of Horadna, I offer the following resolution, consisting of two points: First, fire all the rabbis of Horadna and abolish their paid positions. Let those lazy freeloaders go to work! Second, the orphanages should be combined, and let's give the children a proper secular-Yiddish education and a Bundist, socialist upbringing."

The religious councilmen had heard quite enough. They leaped to their feet and bellowed, "Blood will mix in the streets if the orphans are mixed together!" One enraged elderly member, in a small Polish Hasidic hat and a black frock coat with a silver chain across his vest, waved his walking stick threateningly at the Bundist and cried out: "You brazen boor! Just to spite you, the orphans will wear fringes and not your red ties!"

The Bundist laughed in his face. He was a man who had no fear of Cossack whips or Siberian hard labor under the czar. So was he going to tremble before a Hasid? The Orthodox kehillah members argued among themselves even more bitterly and heatedly. The Agudah people accused the Mizrachi of responsibility for this sacrilege: if one could speak against the Horadna Rav, the head of the council of great Talmudic scholars, they argued, then why not worship idols! The Mizrachi people shouted back that however great a scholar the Horadna Rav was, he didn't have a monopoly on the Torah. The Torah belongs to all Jews!

The meeting broke up with the business at hand unresolved, and the dispute spilled out into the streets. It was dark, the snow whipped at inflamed faces, a sharp wind blew into open mouths. People continued arguing till the overlapping clusters of shadows thinned out, but gradually they disappeared into their respective alleys, ducking to enter their low houses. Only the whirling snowstorm continued to howl in the darkness outside.

14.

THE CONTROVERSY that passed from the Grand Synagogue to the kehillah snowballed through the other synagogues of Horadna. It became a subject of sharp wrangling even in homes and shops.

The owner of a hardware store, finding himself without customers, felt his very body rusting away as he contemplated his piles of unsold merchandise —rolls of sheet metal, boxes of nails, keys and locks, and door bolts. He ducked his head into the collar of his lambskin coat as he struggled through the snowstorm to Ezra Edelman's yard-goods store across the street. Here, too, there were no customers —no one came out in such weather to buy fabric. The only people present were all neighborhood shopkeepers, who had gathered together to discuss the Horadna rabbinate. Ezra himself, despite his being the Graipewo Rav's son-in-law, did not care —or pretended not to care—about what they were saying. The men argued good-naturedly, expressing themselves in half-parables.

"Our Rav is like a beacon to the entire world," observed one, "they come to him from everywhere; but what does Horadna get out of it? Nothing."

"To compare anyone to the Horadna Rav," retorted another man, "is like comparing an old bag of sticks to the moon."

To which the first speaker rejoined: "Our Rav is like a daughter-in-law with the face of a doll. It's

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a joy to look at her and to be seen with her in public, but at home she can't tie a ribbon on a cat's tail."

Just then the hardware merchant walked in, and promptly interjected: "And what would you do if God sent you a daughter-in-law who was good for nothing and looked like a monkey?" At this, Ezra Edelman burst out laughing, to show he had no concern about his father-in-law's problems and that he knew they didn't mean his wife.

When, however, he returned home for the midday meal, Serel was standing in the middle of the room with the twins clutching her apron and the baby at her breast, and she greeted her husband with a screech:

"I don't want my mother to become the Horadna Rebbetzin. Do you hear? I don't want it!"

Ezra had always been pleased by the pattern: the more Serel argued with her mother, the more she listened to him. It was just that this time she hadn't prepared his dinner, and to him all this rabbinical talk was about as appetizing as a bitter onion; he was really fed up with it. Furrowing his narrow forehead in frustration, he stuck his stubby hands into his pockets and grumbled, as he struggled to keep himself from raising a hand to a woman with a child at her breast:

"Listen to me, Serel, how many times have I told you that the more you fight with your mother, the more you show that the two of you are out of the same mold? And I hate a shrew. Why should you worry if your mother becomes the Horadna Rebbetzin?"

Just like her mother, Serel could keep quiet when she had to. With her baby in her arms, she turned abruptly and rushed into the kitchen to fix some dinner for her husband, leaving the twins to crawl on the floor at their father's feet. Ezra eased himself into an armchair, leafed through a newspaper, and let out a deep sigh. "My neighbor, the hardware man, hit the nail on the head with his example of the good-for-nothing wife."

Serel could hardly wait for her husband to finish eating and return to the shop. Leaving the dishes on the table, she called her neighbor's thin, pale daughter to keep an eye on the children. Then she threw on her long overcoat, set a beret over her disheveled hair, burst out of the house, her overshoes unfastened, and ran to her brothers' store.

As usual, the storm had driven many customers into the store for rubbers, half-boots, warm overshoes, and sport shoes. The salesmen could barely handle all the business. Yet the Koenigsberg brothers refused to come out from behind the counter. Every time the door opened, they would tremble and then heave a sigh of relief, thanking God if the man who walked in was not one of the Horadna Rav's followers. Their Agudah friends were berating them at every turn—at services in the morning, all day in the store, and even at night in their homes, always with the same complaint: how could they allow their father to be dragged into this attack on the Gaon, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt? For heaven's sake! Had they not also been educated in the yeshivah? They should know what ordinary people didn't know: that these rabble-rousers didn't care a bit about the glory of the Torah, and that when they insulted one rabbi, they were insulting all rabbis. So why didn't they sit down and talk to their father? But Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah both knew that it was their mother that they would have to talk to. So they stayed in the store, ruefully anticipating the inevitable confrontation. Then the door burst open and the snowstorm blew in their sister, her mouth open and ready to shout at them, but the din of the crowded store startled her. In a moment she was standing next to her brothers, half hidden from the customers by the counter.

"Our father married very badly. . . . Why do you look at me like that? Don't you know why Mother is pushing Father to become the Rav of Horadna? She wants revenge on the Horadna Rav for breaking their engagement before Father married her."

Serel had always complained to her husband that her brothers were such sheep, such dishrags, such big lummoxes—their mother ruled them completely, and they let her. So she was not prepared for the two furious faces that confronted her now. Both men were beside themselves with anger, and before they spoke, they turned to make sure no one could hear them.

"Shut up! Your big mouth will be the end of all of us. Don't we have enough trouble as it is? All we need is for everyone to know what the Graipewo Rav's daughter is saying about her mother!"

Serel was petrified by her brothers' outburst even more than she had been by her husband's. In a low voice she answered, "But I haven't told a soul, not even Ezra." Yet Yankel-Dovid breathed heavily and Gedaliah anxiously wiped the sweat under his beard with a handkerchief. "Don't even let it come to your lips!" they warned, and did not mention to her that they were going to see their mother that very night.

PERELE could hardly recognize her sons. They said nothing about her grandchildren and they even refused to have a glass of tea. They had come while their father was conducting a class in the synagogue so that they could tell her the harsh truth, recalling all her sins ever since she had brought their father to Horadna and made him become a member of the Rabbinical Court. Now she was pushing him again, into something he had never dreamed of—becoming the Rav of the Mizrachi of Horadna.

Meanwhile, their father was being held up to ridicule and hatred by his adversaries, while his erstwhile supporters were using him as an excuse to abuse a great Gaon and a grieving father who had just lost his only daughter. And this after the Horadna Rav had supported their father for a seat on the Rabbinical Court, against the opposition of all the other rabbis. So what did Mother want of her family, what was she after?

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Perele sat near a small table, her right hand leaning on a huge prayer book, a harried smile on her lips. The longer her sons berated her, the more nervously her fingers tapped on the cover of the prayer book. But she let her sons vent their anger on her before she answered. It was not she, she said quietly, who had started this war between the Agudah and the Mizrachi; it was not she who had instigated the riot last Sabbath in the Grand Synagogue; and it was not she who had aroused the people to challenge the Horadna Rav and his followers. Besides, Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah should remember how, when she had visited their shoe store and watched them crawl about on their knees attending to customers and asked them why their wives didn't come down and help, her own two sons had told her, as gruffly as one speaks to a stepmother, not to interfere in their lives. But now they were meddling in her life and even had the nerve to come and scold her.

Grimacing as if she had a sharp pain in her back, Perele got up from her chair and hobbled to the sofa. The sons wanted to help their mother but she warded them off with her elbows, and her entire body shrank away from them as if they were two evil spirits who had come for her soul. Perele stretched herself out on the sofa, with her sons standing by as if already accused, tried, and convicted. Lying on her back, her face became even more drawn and her wide-open eyes shone with a tearful gleam. When she spoke, her voice was hoarse, saturated with grief and bitterness. She looked intently at the ceiling, as if her sons weren't there and she was talking to herself.

Every sage prays that his sons will grow up to be just like him or even greater. Every rabbi wants his son-in-law to be a Talmudic scholar. That was exactly what the Graipewo Rav's sons and the Staropol Rav's grandsons should have become—prominent rabbis in big cities. Yet they preferred to sell shoes and to think less of themselves than the whole world thought of them. As for her son-in-law, why even talk about him? Serel's husband was a vulgar ignoramus. So, instead of wanting some dignity for their old father, his children would like him to be a nobody like them, respected by no one. Still, Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah were upstanding members of the community, their support of their father would mean something. They could inspire their friends to stand behind the Graipewo Rav. But why should strangers get involved when their own sons seemed to have more respect for other rabbis than for their own father? It didn't even bother them when their father was not permitted to finish a sermon in the Grand Synagogue. And now they came to their mother with complaints against her for holding their father's honor dear.

The rebbetzin was still gazing straight up at the ceiling as tears ran from her eyes. The sons knew it was not like their mother to cry—she hated tears and sentimentality. Yet they also knew that, when brought to tears, she got very angry and it was best not to console her. So both sons stood silent near the sofa till their mother finally turned her face to them and told them to go home to their wives and children. She didn't want their father to find them here when he returned from synagogue and see how ill they had made her. He'd never forgive them, she said, and they could rest assured that she would never tell him of the great respect they had come to show their mother.

15.

THE OVERCAST sky of Purim eve seemed to be wrapped in a smoky fog. The frost had settled and the snow had turned gray on the ground. A tree was rustling its crown of last year's shriveled leaves. The wind plucked the leaves as if mocking the tree for still wearing last season's ashen crown even though an entire winter had passed and it was nearly spring again. The quarrels surrounding the Graipewo Rav had not abated over the winter, but had indeed grown more heated. On Purim eve the rabbinical judges, the Agudahniks, and all the Horadna Rav's followers came to the Rav's home and spoke to him openly, accusingly:

"With all due respect to the Rav, may the Rav forgive us—he alone is to blame! If the Rav had not allowed the Graipewo Rav to join the Horadna Court in the first place, his followers wouldn't have had the nerve to mount this scandalous campaign to make him the Town Maggid and Rav of the Mizrachi. If we give in to them on this, they'll have more to say later on religious matters. . . .

"But if," they urged the Rav, "we hold our ground, the dispute will eventually fade away. The anger has already boiled itself out. Even the man in the street isn't sympathetic to the Graipewo's claim anymore."

"You have a responsibility to us, Rabbi, as your supporters," said the Wolkowysk Street Rabbi, plainly irritated. Even if you place Rabbi Koenigsberg under you, he'll still lord it over us."

Since it was a fast day, the Fast of Esther, the old rabbis all had darkened, tired faces. Yet the young Agudahniks were all lively and sprightly, with rosy cheeks and bright eyes—for they, it seemed, had not fasted. No doubt they had availed themselves of the dispensation seized on by students of the Lithuanian yeshivahs who looked upon fasting as a penance meant only for the ignorant masses. The redemption of scholars, they claimed, lay in vigorous study. So the smooth faces of the well-fed young men were ablaze with passionate zeal, their eyes sparkling with anger.

Reb Moshe-Mordecai understood that these pleas were really directed toward his rebbetzin. The whole town was saying that it was she who urged him to give in on everything. His followers believed that the rebbetzin had been overcome with grief at the loss of her child. She was not thinking clearly, and the Rav ought not to be listening to her. Rabbi Eisenstadt listened patiently to all of

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these complaints and then, once again, went to the bedroom to speak to his wife.

Sarah-Rivkah was sitting at the edge of her bed, as she did for hours at a time, clutching the small photograph of her daughter. This time she did not hide the photograph under her pillow when she heard her husband's footsteps. She was well aware of who was in the court chamber and the purpose of their visit. As soon as her husband entered the bedroom, she began to speak in a tone of stern determination. He should have never permitted the rabbinical judges of Horadna to harass the Graipewo Rav until he couldn't stand it and stopped coming to the court, to avoid his enemies. And those thugs who hadn't let the Graipewo Rav speak should be thrown out of the house. "Moshe-Mordecai," she said resolutely," you ought to beg his forgiveness and help him become the Town Maggid, the Rav of Horadna—whatever he wants!"

Rabbi Eisenstadt had heard similar things from his wife many times before, and each time anger had made his mustache bristle, his nostrils quiver, his hands shake. But this time, when she added that he ought to apologize to the Graipewo Rav, he burst out laughing: he should ask forgiveness of someone who had invaded the town and stirred up strife and discord?

Sarah-Rivkah still held her daughter's picture with her fingertips. Her Blumele, she marveled, didn't look at all sickly. Look at her fresh head of hair, the sweet smile on her round lips, her long, slender neck. The Horadna Rebbetzin raised her gaunt face, and her dark eyes flashed with hatred at her husband for thinking of anything other than their lost child. She turned to the photograph again and gazed at it until her eyes became wan and glassy. Then she spoke with the drone of a leaky faucet that measures drop after heavy drop: her ancestor, the saintly Rabbi Alexander Ziskind, left a will in which he commanded his children and all his descendants not to become leaders of the Jewish community because that leads to pride and to striving for honors. And if his heirs did not obey his wishes, he wrote in his will, he would not plead for them before the Heavenly Court in the next world. He swore he would surely avenge their disobedience. So he had avenged himself on his great-great-granddaughter.

With his hands clasped behind him, the Rav looked at his wife from under his knit, pointed brows and answered her with impatience. He must conduct himself according to the traditions of his family. Her great-grandfather had also instructed that he be humiliated after his death by having the four kinds of capital punishment administered to his body. But the tradition of the Eisenstadts was that a scholar is never permitted to allow himself to be humiliated—not in life and not in death. Well, now he was going to teach Horadna a lesson! Sarah-Rivkah knew how often the ultra-Orthodox community of Jerusalem had written to ask him to become their Rav and head of the Rabbinical Court. He had always turned them down, but now he was going to write them to accept their invitation.

"Then you'll have to go there alone, Moshe-Mordecai," Sarah-Rivkah said with a smile, the smile of one who knows that despite all the tears that have already been shed, there will be no end to the tears one must live with. "I will not leave Blumele's grave. All the sacred tombs of Jerusalem cannot take the place of her patch of earth here in Horadna."

The Rav gazed at his wife for a moment, and then abruptly turned and walked out of the bedroom toward the court chamber. Some of those gathered there were talking among themselves; others sat quietly, suffering from the dryness in their mouths and the pangs in their stomachs from fasting. The younger men were openly furious. Why did the Rav tremble so before his wife? True, she was a great rabbi's daughter and a great rabbi's wife, and besides, a mother who had lost her only daughter; but in religious matters, who asks a wife for her opinion? When the Rav entered, they all rose. Rabbi Eisenstadt leaned on the table with both hands.

"Gentlemen, I inherited the position of Rav of Horadna from my father-in-law, may he rest in peace, and I will not permit my wife and me to be torn apart over it. And another thing: if the Jews of Horadna want another Rav, I will not stand in their way. And if you persist in making an issue over it, then I will resign from the Horadna rabbinate altogether. Peace in my home is more important to me. So go, gentlemen, let them not have to wait for you in your synagogues to read the Megillah."

HIS FACE was drawn from anguish and strain as he spoke, and the group could see that this would be his final word on the matter. The rabbis knew that except for this one time in the matter of the Graipewo Rav, their Chief Judge had never imposed his will on them. His followers thought of him also as by nature a kind and gentle person, and a trusted friend to all who came within range of his concern. So none of them wanted to argue with him and cause him more grief. They all left quietly. But once outside, they did talk. The Rav had not the courage Mordecai had shown Queen Esther. When Esther claimed to have no power against the king's edict, Mordecai had rebuked her: "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house."

Though they received the Rav's words in silence, all the synagogues were aflame with the news that the Horadna Rav had given in to the Graipewo Rav in the interests of peace. But Horadna should bury its head in shame that it exchanged their great sage for a maggid. Among the crowds, there would be raised every now and then a lonely voice asking: why can't Horadna have two Ravs? But the voice would be lost amid the great numbers of Jews who reacted with shock—

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it had never entered their minds that another Rav might join their leader in the Horadna rabbinate.

Even the members and trustees of the Stone Synagogue did not revel in their victory. "Shh!" they hissed at the children who banged their sticks and turned their noisemakers each time the Megillah reader mentioned Haman's name. In the banging they seemed to hear an accusation for their having humiliated a great Torah scholar. They had not expected Rabbi Eisenstadt to yield so easily, even to the point of warning his followers that if they didn't let his decision stand and stop the bickering, he would step down. So they congratulated the Graipewo Rav with dejected faces, as if he had made them transgress a great precept of the Torah to defend his honor. The Koenigsberg brothers didn't congratulate their father at all. All through the Megillah reading they stood next to him, silent like mourners. The new Rav of the Mizrachi came home with a reddened face, his eyes burning with tears, a choking sensation in his throat. He pointed a long, threatening finger at Perele.

"This is all your fault. You! Reb Moshe-Mordecai gave in on everything, and now I am more miserable than when his fanatics interrupted my sermon in the Grand Synagogue with their hoots. Now everyone knows that he didn't send those hecklers as you convinced me and everyone else he had."

Heartbroken, Reb Uri-Zvi cried out that now all the other rabbis would shun him. Even the trustees of the Stone Synagogue were sorry they had ever started this. And his own sons had stood next to him during services, silent and downcast at the thought of the Horadna Rav's having suffered such an insult.

Perele had anticipated the victory. Word had reached her that it was the Horadna Rebbetzin who had prevailed on the Rav to back down. When Perele went shopping that week, the women, their mouths piously pursed, talked of nothing but the saintliness of the Horadna Rebbetzin, Sarah-Rivkah, and how she had never sought honors, especially since the death of her only daughter. Perele understood what they really meant. Even though the Graipewo Rebbetzin had lived to enjoy her children and grandchildren, she was still not satisfied unless people were bowing down to her. The Graipewo Rebbetzin listened with a sweet smile and returned home from the store with delicately measured Sabbath-like steps.

On the Sabbath that followed, she had come to synagogue in the long dress with the narrow waist and the bustle. Her head kerchief was intricately embroidered with pearls and she had prayed from her small, gilt-edged siddur with such solemnity and self-assurance that she seemed to be giving an object lesson in how a rebbetzin ought to bear herself. It was with that same self-assurance that she now deigned to reply to her husband. Why, she asked him, had he come home screeching like a hysterical woman instead of greeting her with "Happy holiday" and "Happy Purim"?

"Accept the title Horadna bestows on you as your due. Get involved in community matters and invite the important townsmen to the house. Finish your book and make sure that all the scholars get it. Gradually your conflict with Reb Moshe-Mordecai will be forgotten. Say what you may, he was always very clever. He saw only too well that he had no choice, so he gave in."

16.

All Horadna shuddered. Word had spread that at the Purim feast Rabbi Eisenstadt had felt a pressure in his chest and sharp pain in his left arm and shoulder. He broke into a cold sweat and nearly fainted as he gasped for breath. The Rebbetzin Sarah-Rivkah cried for help, which brought the neighbors running with a doctor. He examined the Rav—listened with his stethoscope, took his pulse and blood pressure—and finally announced that Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt had had a mild heart attack. He needed rest, the doctor declared, and must avoid excitement.

The townspeople, when they heard the news, shook their heads. "Is is any wonder, after all that our Rav has had to endure from the Graipewo and his bunch? Even his own rebbetzin urged him to give in. Well, now he has given in, and it has done him in."

Rabbi Uri-Zvi Koenigsberg was terrified by the news. When he told Perele, she stood pale and motionless. Her eyes shone with the secret glow of a youthful memory, like a window at dusk that reflects the last rosy hue left in the sky.

Finally, the Graipewo Rebbetzin shook herself awake and coughed in an angry rasp. "He was sickly and nervous even as a child. He's too ambitious for a man with such a weak heart. He wants to run everything."

On the eve of Passover the fresh buds sparkled from the trees, wrapped in a transparent pink mist. Half the sky was covered with clouds while the other half revealed a deep, crystal blue. In the alleyways where the sun didn't shine, there were still patches of yellow, speckled snow. A gentle, moist spring wind caressed people's faces. The wine merchants were busy selling wine for the four cups of the Seder and the ovens were afire baking matzoh. Everywhere the people talked of the Rav's feeling better and of his launching a project he had dreamed of for a long time. He was about to establish a kollel, an academy of advanced Talmudic studies for married scholars. They would attend his lectures and be supported from the funds entrusted to him. Reb Moshe-Mordecai had always yearned for his own yeshivah, but he had been too busy with communal matters. Now that he had miraculously recovered, he wanted to dedicate him-

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self to teaching Torah. Since he didn't have any children, he might as well have students.

The first members of the kollel were the Rav's own students, the Horadna-born young men supported by their well-to-do fathers-in-law. During the intermediary days of Passover, news of the kollel spread to the surrounding towns, and right after the holiday more students arrived: young scholars who had not yet found a pulpit and those who did not desire to be pulpit rabbis but did not want to embark on business careers either. They all came, eager to partake of the great scholar's genius and to bask in the warm atmosphere of yeshivah camaraderie. Though they had not yet even found suitable living quarters, they sat in the Rav's beth midrash and studied with great devotion. Rabbi Eisenstadt issued an invitation to Jews all over the world to support his new academy, and no one doubted that the response from everywhere would be most generous.

The Jews of Horadna were very pleased that a kollel was being established in their city. They talked among themselves of how "out of the strong came forth sweetness." Out of controversy and strife came something good for Judaism. When the Rav saw that he received nothing but disrespect from the mob, they said, he surrounded himself with scholars. Well, let the Graipewo Rav try to establish an academy. Who would come to study? And who would send him money to support his students?

"Now do you see whom you're dealing with? He's already healthy again and he's thought of a new way of showing his greatness by starting a kollel," Perele said to her husband, as she bit her lower lip. "Why, even your own sons say they plan to listen to Reb Moshe-Mordecai's lectures. You must tell them that they dare not go! That's all we need, for people to say that Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah have nothing to learn from their father!"

"I thank God that Reb Moshe-Mordecai has recovered. A great stone has been lifted from my heart," Reb Uri-Zvi answered. "And thank God Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah are willing to tear themselves away from the business for a few hours to sit in the kollel and study."

RABBI KOENIGSBERG soon realized what a great yoke had been placed on his shoulders when he became the maggid of Horadna. Perele had expected such a dismal turn of events even less than her husband. For it was not the finer townspeople who were, by virtue of his new post, drawn to the Graipewo Rav's home to visit or to confer; on the contrary, those who continually crossed his threshold were brazen beggars and contentious boors.

One man with a split lip came in as if it were his own home and happily rubbed his hands. "God bless you, Rabbi. Where does one wash one's hands for eating? I haven't had a bite today." Perele recognized him immediately as an impudent beggar who tramped from home to home, but she served him some food anyway. Her husband sat at the table and asked his guest if there was anything he needed. The man, his beard sprinkled with crumbs and bits of his meal, moaned that he was in need of everything: better luck, better health, an income, and a dowry with which to marry off his eldest daughter. Perele gave him a little money, saw him to the door, and then scolded her husband for sitting and talking with such a freeloader as if he were an equal.

That same day the widow of a pious recluse, a short woman with a huge wig, came to see Rabbi Koenigsberg. Everyone in Horadna knew that she visited Rabbi Eisenstadt every few days to bewail her fate and ask him for a voucher for one or another charitable organization. And with her bundle of vouchers she would make her way to all the treasuries and plead for help. But lately, whenever she went to the Rav's home, Sarah-Rivkah would intercept her and ask her not to bother the Rav because he had not yet fully recovered. So the widow called on the new maggid for one note she could give the charity trustees for food and another note for clothing. She was really starving, she insisted, and hadn't a thing to wear. Even during the heat of summer she had to go about with her heavy winter shawl on her head.

"I'll gladly give you all the letters you want, but I am not personally acquainted with the trustees of the local charities and I can't say if my request will carry much weight," Reb Uri-Zvi replied.

"We do not send people elsewhere for charity. That's not our way; we give from our own pocket," Perele interrupted and stuck a coin into the woman's hand as she hustled her out the door. Later Perele scolded her husband again, her lips snapping like shears at his naiveté for telling the old woman that the trustees wouldn't honor his vouchers because he didn't know them personally. "When you aren't able to help, then you should rather appear heartless and refuse help, or else tell them you haven't any time for this. But you must never let the word get out that you have no authority to get things done."

The next day brought a tall, broad man, stooped like a great bent oak. His head was huge with long white frazzled hair and a thick, unkempt gray beard. One eye was clear with a darting dark iris, while the other was narrow and beclouded by a deep blood-red film. He was dressed in tattered clothes, yet he had the appearance of an exiled prophet. As he entered, he looked about anxiously as if he were carrying a great secret and feared lest he fall into the hands of enemies. Then he nearly swooned as if he had trudged across the great deserts without eating or drinking. Yet he didn't collapse into the chair, but sat down slowly, gazing at the Rav with his one clear searching eye. At the same time Reb Uri-Zvi half rose, his hands and knees quivering as if he expected the stranger at any moment to point an accusing finger at him and shout: "Thou art the man! Guilty!" But this hoary man only whispered a few words, which instilled an even greater fear in the Rav.

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"Rabbi, I've come to you to obtain a rabbinical ruling," he said.

The Rav was speechless. Perele stood aside and looked suspiciously at this stranger. Suddenly she screamed at him, "You drunkard! You impostor! Get out of this house this minute or I'll call the police!" The stranger did not become flustered or angry, nor did he seem the least bit afraid. He did not answer the rebbetzin, but only looked at her with the calm, cynical, slightly perplexed smile of a thief who, though cornered, knows he will be released. He shuffled out of the room with tottering footsteps.

"To Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt come scholars to study at his feet, and who comes to you? Tramps and comedians! He has 'rascal' written all over his face, and you get up for him as if he were Sir Moses Montefiore. Couldn't you tell right away that he was a drunkard who wanted to fool you with smooth talk into giving him money for a bottle of whiskey?" his wife yelled at him. He gaped at her with awe and reverence—she seemed to him to be the embodiment of wisdom, the very Queen of Sheba. The stranger looked for all the world like a holy wayfarer of the deserts of Scripture and yet his dear wife had seen through his façade and recognized him for the charlatan he really was.

On yet another occasion there appeared two emissaries who claimed to be collecting money for the Etz Hayyim Yeshivah in the holy city of Jerusalem. "Are you really from the Holy Land?" Perele asked them. "No, we're from Baranowicze,"* answered one of them, a tall, thin man in a long rabbinic coat. "But we have a letter from the rabbis of Jerusalem authorizing us to raise money for their yeshivah." He bore himself with great self-importance and had a strong, sincere face with the neat, squared gray beard of the sexton of a great synagogue.

His companion presented a sharp contrast: a short, fat man wearing a creased shirt, a worn tie, and a coat with a velvet collar. He had long hands that looked as if they had been created for grabbing and tearing, a short gray beard trimmed to a point, thick lips, and eyes in which played the smile of a man unfazed by rebuff. Perele hated him from the start for his flowery language and his smooth talk. "Don't you recognize me, Rebbetzin? I had already the honor of visting you in Graipewo, Rebbetzin. But now you are the Horadna Rebbetzin, so it is only fitting that you should generously support so great a yeshivah as Etz Hayyim of Jerusalem. The other Horadna Rebbetzin and her husband, Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt, have always given us a nice contribution. Just ask him," he said, showing Perele the past year's receipt book and wearing a sexton's scupulously honest face.

Perele, however, made only a small contribution and spoke in a deliberately acidulous tone:

"The Town Maggid doesn't receive dollars from America to dole out to charity as Rabbi Eisenstadt does. We give to charity out of our own money. You may go, gentlemen. Go, a good day to you."

When the men had left, Perele grimaced as if she had a cramp in her stomach, and told her husband to congratulate her: at last someone had called her "the Horadna Rebbetzin," even if it was a notorious bootlicker, a swindler, a shameless mountebank. She hadn't even the honor of welcoming to their home plain, decent people, not even impoverished townspeople with a good name. "And they don't come to you for advice or litigation any more than they come to visit," she cried out to him in a loud, dry voice that rattled and rasped like an iron kettle whose water has boiled out on the fire. Reb Uri-Zvi gathered his thoughts: what did she want of him, after all! People took their litigation to the Rabbinical Court and she had absolutely forbidden him to sit on the court.

"But now you're not just another judge, now you're the Town Maggid, as much the Rav of Horadna as Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. It's time you returned to the court and made your presence felt," Perele screamed, beside herself, and Reb Uri-Zvi marveled once more. So small a woman and no longer a youngster, so frail that the slightest thing made her sick so she could only lie on the sofa groaning with headache, yet she had more energy, thank God, than he and all their children put together, no evil eye! And what an expert on strategy—nothing less than a general! First she had pushed him onto the court, then she had ordered him not to go, and now she was sending him there again.

17.

Rabbi Koenigsberg returned home from the Rabbinical Court overflowing with tales of wonder: they had treated him with the greatest respect, they had given him the most prominent seat up front, and Rabbi Eisenstadt had requested his opinion at every turn in the deliberations. Perele's heart leaped with joy as she thought, "Your former betrothed is doing this for your sake." And she believed this, even though her common sense told her that the Rav was merely being clever in not wanting to antagonize the new Town Maggid and create more trouble for himself.

Another time Reb Uri-Zvi came home to tell excitedly how, in the midst of a case involving two big businessmen, Reb Moshe-Mordecai had turned to him and asked, "What does the head of the Rabbinical Court say?" Perele again heard her heart leap and shout joyously: "Your former betrothed is doing this all for you." But then, she looked at it all from a different angle: her husband would never amount to anything unless he was pushed, and now even his former adversary had to push him. So it was in cold silence and with downcast eyes that Perele listened as her husband interpreted Rabbi Eisenstadt's intent.

* "Goatsville."

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"Do you understand? He is the Chief Rabbinic Judge, and he makes *me* the head of the Rabbinical Court."

On a third occasion Reb Uri-Zvi related how Reb Moshe-Mordecai had reminded him that, as Town Maggid, he must speak more often about keeping a kosher home and observing the Sabbath, and especially against the wanton ways of the young Jewish women. Soon it would be summer, and the boys and girls would be rowing down the river on the Sabbath. This time there was no joy at all in Perele's heart. She surmised that the wily Rabbi Eisenstadt was heaping honors on her husband in order to alienate him from his supporters and make him one of his own. Her victory no longer gave Perele any satisfaction. But before the townspeople she jealously guarded her station as the Town Maggid's wife. At times she would go out of her house in the middle of the week in a long, old-fashioned skirt and a small, flat hat with three faded violets. She did not carry a basket with her anymore to the shops, but had everything delivered to her home.

IT WAS past Lag B'Omer, well into spring. The evening sky shone a deep, dark blue and during the day the sky was ablaze with a cool, blinding brilliance. The leafy trees sparkled with fresh and moist greenery, not yet dusty and faint from the summer heat. Perele's neighbors sat in their doorways, basking in the sun, and watched her walk by with her dainty Sabbath-like steps and so lighthearted a smile that she seemed to have stepped out of an old portrait. She had already overheard the women refer to her as "the Horadna Rebbetzin" as they talked among themselves, and the more she heard it, the more she wanted to meet Sarah-Rivkah Eisenstadt. But Sarah-Rivkah was never seen in public. Perele was convinced that Reb Moshe-Mordecai had never invited her husband for dinner because he didn't want to confront her, his former fiancée. She laughed to herself, "Why shouldn't he want to see me? I'm a grandmother already."

A short while later, however, an opportunity unexpectedly presented itself: Reb Uri-Zvi informed her that the Schloss Street Rabbi had invited him to the Bar Mitzvah of his youngest son and reminded him to bring the rebbetzin. Later his wife Bashka came to invite her personally.

"The Rebbetzin Sarah-Rivkah will also be there and she tells me that she wants to meet you," she said to Perele, who donned a sweet smile to mask a bitter grimace. She thought that no less than her own curiosity about the bride her former fiancé had taken was Sarah-Rivkah's desire to see the woman her husband had rejected.

The Schloss Street Rabbi's celebration took place the Saturday night before Shavuoth. The men were seated in two large rooms, and the women in a third. The pug-nosed Bar Mitzvah boy was a young scholar with a stubborn, narrow forehead, full, flushed cheeks, and his mother's laughing eyes.

He delivered his Bar Mitzvah discourse with fervor, his brow furrowed, and gesticulated with outstretched thumbs after the manner of an old Talmudic sage: "On the eve of the fourteenth of Nisan, the night before Passover, one must search the house for leaven by the light of a candle, says the Mishnah. By the same token, as one enters his fourteenth year, as one becomes an adult responsible for his actions, he, too, must search his heart for impurities by the light of the commandments. 'For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light.' Now the question arises, on whom lies the obligation of phylacteries—on the father to place them on his son, or on the son himself? One rabbinic authority, the Sage, Ha-Ittur, rules that there is absolutely no obligation on the son to put on phylacteries before the age of thirteen, according to either the Torah or the Oral Law. Yet the Talmud, Tractate Sukkah, says. . . ." The people listened with rapt attention. One man cupped his hand at his ear to catch every word, another chewed on a strand of his beard, a third clamped his lips in wonder at the boy's genius. As soon as the address was over, there was a tumult and the pealing of glasses. Everyone drank a toast with the rabbi in honor of his son. Bashka, the rabbi's wife, then appeared, tall and exuberant, her cheeks rosy and her eyes shining with joyful pride. She was dressed simply, in a skirt and white blouse, with just a light net over her neatly combed chestnut hair instead of a wig or a headkerchief. With several helpers, she brought platters of cold sweet-and-sour fish, stewed meat, and roasted chicken, flasks of lemonade, baskets filled with rolls and hard white pretzels, bowls of sauerkraut sprinkled with sugar, and plates filled with freshly pickled cucumbers as cold as ice. "Good people, please wash to eat," said the beautiful Bashka, and the guests rose, straightened their backs, and pushed their way toward the kitchen to wash their hands for the meal.

Up front at the head of the table sat the Town Maggid, Rabbi Uri-Zvi Koenigsberg, in his flat velvet yarmulke, a satin coat with wide lapels revealing a woolen tallith kattan over a fresh white shirt. He sat there all alone since Rabbi Eisenstadt, though he had promised to come, had suddenly felt great fatigue and sent word that he could not be there. He would, however, send his rebbetzin, Sarah-Rivkah. On either side of Reb Uri-Zvi sat two older rabbinical judges of the Horadna Court, dourly chewing, choking on their fury at how this small-town rabbi, the Graipewo Rav, had become the star of the Grand Synagogue, the head of the court, and now the guest of honor at their colleague's feast. Still further down the table sat the students of Rabbi Eisenstadt's kollel, in soft felt hats and black frock coats. Their beards, some wispy, some pointed, some black and others blond, still bore the fragrance of youthful and manly energy, as freshly built and unvarnished log cabins still exude the odor of the forest. Yet, while their bearded cheeks chewed and drank with the vigor of new-fledged manhood, within their creased fore-

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heads lay engraved the great pages of the Vilna edition of the Talmud, the fine-print commentaries framing the text, and volume upon volume of the oldest and latest codes and studies. The young men discussed rabbinic law with the Town Maggid, coyly needling him.

They were afraid to criticize him sharply or ridicule him openly lest their mentor, the Horadna Rav, later stamp his feet angrily at them as he had done after they interrupted Rabbi Koenigsberg's sermon in the Grand Synagogue. The students knew that Rabbi Eisenstadt wanted to devote more of his time to the kollel and less to the town—that was why he was bestowing honors on the Town Maggid: let *him* bother with the Horadna townspeople. And yet they couldn't forgive the Graipewo Rav, that fool, for accepting promotion to a place of honor at someone else's hands. So they barraged him with involved questions on Maimonides' Code, and no matter what he answered, they made derisive faces and dismissed his reasoning as pedestrian. Rabbi Koenigsberg's clear visage and white beard sweated heavily. His large, light-blue eyes became filled with astonishment. "But this is exactly what Maharam says! And those are the exact words of Kreisi U'Fleisi!" But the young men wrinkled their noses, shrugged, and one after another answered, "That's just it, everyone knows how conventional Maharam can be. True, Kreisi U'Fleisi is renowned as a great scholar, and yet he's not really a scholar. That is, he has a wealth of knowledge, but he treads the false path of casuistry! He gets lost in his convoluted reasoning!" Reb Uri-Zvi tried to save face by citing Pnei Yehoshuah. But the scholars looked at one another and then at Rabbi Koenigsberg in utter amazement, as if he had delivered an insight worthy of the Bar Mitzvah boy himself.

In the women's room, Perele also sat up front, dressed in her Sabbath best: a dark-red gown with padded hips. On one side of her sat the wife of the Wolkowysk Street Rabbi, with her huge bust and deep masculine voice. But now the burly rebbetzin wasn't opening her mouth, though her heart beat within her like a large fly caught in the web of a tiny spider. And on Perele's other side sat the wizened, ancient wife of the Old Marketplace Rabbi, wrapped in her faded green shawls and kerchiefs, nodding her hennish head, as always. Around the table were other women wearing the latest-style hats with many feathers, their expressions as pious as if they were reading the weekly Torah portion in the Tzenah U'renah. And at the other end of the table, in a black dress and wearing a black hat, sat the Rebbetzin Sarah-Rivkah Eisenstadt. In the light of the brilliantly lit room her pale, gaunt face was much more prominent, as were her long thin hands and tall bony neck.

Perele nonchalantly ate a chicken wing and sipped soda water from a tall goblet of thick greenish glass. She drank from the glass by straining her neck forward and just barely pursing her lips at the rim, like a serene dove drinking from a spring, and with the same noble air she spoke one word to this woman and another to that one, all the while thinking of how Sarah-Rivkah Eisenstadt must have looked as a young girl. Could it be that she was a withered leaf even then, and that Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt took her for the sake of her dowry, the Horadna rabbinate? In her smile and in her silence Perele saw a cleverness, a wisdom, but none of the goodness everyone spoke of. She surely had cold, dry, white limbs; a melancholy frost wafted from her face. Her husband hadn't come—was he really tired and not well, as she claimed, or did he want to avoid Perele? One of the women at the table said something about present-day fashions, and Perele seized the opportunity to pontificate loudly in a manner befitting a maggid's wife.

"When I look at the men and women of today, it seems to me that I am looking into a pool reflecting an upside-down world. The girls wear their hair short and the boys have long, curly locks. Opposite us lives a young woman, well off and pretty, but empty-headed. In one day she may wear three outfits. In the morning she walks about, slovenly and disheveled; it's nauseating to look at her. Then during the day she appears in a dress with a tall collar up to her chin and sleeves down over her wrist—one would think her the paragon of modesty. But all her modesty ends above her knees, because from there down she shamelessly parades her legs for the whole world to see. On the evening of the same day she'll go out with a dress down to her feet and flowing like an open umbrella. But her top is practically naked, with a flimsy shawl over her shoulders. When have you ever heard of a young woman of a good home making herself so crazy? And she has plenty of time for all this, but talk to her about separating meat from dairy dishes, or even about having special dishes for Passover, and she'll tell you it's too much work.

"And what do you say, Horadna Rebbetzin?" Perele called across the length of the table. Sarah-Rivkah replied with a wan smile, perhaps agreeing —but she said nothing, and the luster of interest in her dark eyes slowly went out.

SINCE her husband's heart attack, Sarah-Rivkah walked about gingerly, holding her breath for fear something else might happen to him. He now concerned himself less with communal matters, but spent long, arduous hours in heated Talmudic discourse with his students and devoted himself to the supervision of their living arrangements. He had called upon townspeople and urged them to help his students find proper quarters. People eager to rent rooms to these scholars had to appear before Rabbi Eisenstadt and satisfy him that there would be enough room, that the household was not noisy; he even inquired what his students would be served for breakfast and dinner. A few times the Rav sent for a tailor and ordered clothes for the poorer scholars. He leafed through many volumes in preparing his lectures and would often stay up working half the night.

It was serving as a Rosh Yeshivah, Sarah-Rivkah

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saw, that gave the Rav his greatest joy. He had been happy to receive the Bar Mitzvah invitation from the Schloss Street Rabbi, because he loved children even more than the older students. He would affectionately pat and hug them as if they were his own. But on the Sabbath of the Bar Mitzvah he had again felt a painful pressure in his chest. His face became pale and he sighed sadly, "No good, it's no good!" But when his wife wanted to run for a doctor, he said that he was in no real danger and he didn't want the doctor to violate the Sabbath on his account. After nightfall that Saturday, he told Sarah-Rivkah that he was feeling better and urged her to attend the Bar Mitzvah. When she refused, he rose angrily from the bed and announced that he would go there himself. Before his heart attack Reb Moshe-Mordecai had never insisted so harshly that his wife obey him. Sarah-Rivkah went, terrified lest the patient get out of bed again. But before leaving she instructed their elderly maid to keep a watchful eye on the Rav.

Her curiosity about the Graipewo Rebbetzin had disappeared, for her mind was now totally occupied with her ailing husband. Still, she strained to smile and hear what Rebbetzin Koenigsberg was saying. When Perele had finished ridiculing the latest fashions, she turned her sardonic wit onto modern furniture. Bashka liked to dress in the latest styles —in straight-shouldered jackets with sharp lapels, in clothes without too many pleats, in coats with broad pockets and no false buttons. She had much the same taste in furniture: the tables, dressers, and sofas in the house had straight lines and sharp corners, uncluttered by pillows, covers, or ornaments. The legs were tall and sleek and the drawers not oversized, all of which made for less wood and lighter, more open furniture. There were chairs to sit on, not sink into, and even the curtains were of light, sheer material that could not hide the goings-on in the house from the world. Perele noted all this and wanted to ask of the Schloss Street Rebbetzin, "If she believes so much in revealing everything, then why does she wear a net over her hair, and her husband such a huge, old-fashioned hat?" But she thought it unseemly to ask this about her hostess, so instead she praised the old style of furniture: "Then a dresser was a dresser, built to be passed on to children and grandchildren. A table had wide, curved legs and could stand till the end of time. A credenza used to shine with polished glass and had ornate carvings—turrets and gates like a real castle. A chest was plated with wrought iron and rolled on casters, and you could put three brides' wardrobes in it. A house used to have high ceilings and huge rooms, the front door was big and heavy, and sometimes had an iron gate in front of it. Even before you entered such a house, you knew that a well-established family, respectable people, lived there. . . .

"Today?" Perele at last concluded her harangue. "Today both the people and their furniture are like a hastily recited prayer. One slurs a few lines from the beginning, mutters a whole chunk in the middle, and swallows the end. The important thing is to take it easy, to make life easy. Is that not so, Horadna Rebbetzin?"

AGAIN Sarah-Rivkah nodded silently and thought, "It seems the Graipewo Rebbetzin likes to boss; likes to be heard and to be seen. There's no question that the fight between Moshe-Mordecai and the Graipewo Rav was Perele's doing." If Moshe-Mordecai had married Perele, Sarah-Rivkah reflected, he would have been happier than with her. Perele would never have demanded that he ignore the honors due him—and Sarah-Rivkah wiped her forehead as if trying to chase away these thoughts. She found it odd and even a bit annoying that the women at the table listened awestruck to the Graipewo Rebbetzin and did not dare to contradict her.

From fashions to furniture Perele turned to berating the unlettered rabble of past and present. As a young girl she had always been puzzled because she noticed that her father, the Staropol Rav, may he rest in peace, always stood up when any scholar would enter the room. In her youthful mind she had wondered why her father, older and more learned than his guest, would rise for the rabbi just as any ordinary Jew would. But when she got older, she had realized that only a scholar can truly appreciate another scholar. "And if *he* doesn't show respect to a sage, who will, a wagon driver?" Perele sang out to the other end of the table, to the Horadna Rebbetzin, expecting her confirmation.

This time, however, Sarah-Rivkah turned her head aside and answered coldly: "I wouldn't say that: rabbis fight among themselves more often than ordinary people. And when a Rav holds a simple Jew dear, the man will love the Rav even more and will rise from his seat ten times a day for him."

Perele was startled, and for a while she sat quietly, totally taken aback by so blunt a reply. Her expression became strained as she searched for the perfect retort to the Horadna Rebbetzin. But Sarah-Rivkah resumed her sad, placid smile. Rabbinical lineage, honor, and contention were the last things on her mind, especially now.

Suddenly, at the men's table, there fell an anxious silence. Everyone turned toward the door and Sarah-Rivkah saw the host standing stock still, his face pale; his wife Bashka standing beside him, even more frightened; and behind them a crowd pushing in through the front door. Bad news hung in the air and no one wanted to utter it. But Sarah-Rivkah felt that something terrible had happened.

"Don't be frightened, Rebbetzin, your husband is alive," the Rebbetzin Bashka at last said as she embraced her. "Your maid has sent for the doctor and asked that you come," said Bashka's husband, while trying to calm Sarah-Rivkah by fanning his hands in front of her. But Sarah-Rivkah was speechless. Her face grew still paler, her eyes glazed over

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with the blinding darkness of overpowering fear. She had to be helped out of the room.

18.

IN THE synagogue and in their homes the townspeople talked of little else but Rabbi Eisenstadt's second heart attack. He was feeling better, they said, but the real problem was that his wife was in a state of total shock. The Rav, afraid his condition would worsen in the hospital, insisted on staying at home, where he lay in bed surrounded by constant commotion. On the one hand, the Rav wanted his kollel students near him because, he said, they cheered him up and their presence gave him the opportunity to merit God's mercy by teaching Torah. The Rav asked whoever came to see him, however ordinary, for a blessing. But on the other hand, the doctor had ordered that all strangers be sent away. And Sarah-Rivkah, in the middle of all this, stood at times in paralyzed silence; at other times she tore at her hair and ran to the cemetery to pray for her husband's recovery at her daughter's grave and at the graves of her grandfather and great-grandfather.

It was with stiffened fingers and a quiver in her knees that Perele went about her cooking and baking in preparation for Shavuoth. She was tempted to lie down on the couch and think of the sick Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt, yet, unlike her daughter, she could not tolerate a mess in her house. Three times a day—in the morning after services, in the afternoon after the court session, and in the evening from the beth midrash—she waited expectantly for her husband to return home with a report on the Rav's condition.

Rabbi Koenigsberg was no less anguished. All Perele's anxious inquiries about Rabbi Eisenstadt's progress suggested to him that she was going through the same torment as he: pangs of guilt and regret for having contended with the Horadna Rav. On the day before Shavuoth, Reb Uri-Zvi came home around noon and reported a new trouble. For years a crazy woman whose husband had left her had been coming to see Rabbi Eisenstadt. She pestered the Rav to force her husband to come back to her from wherever it was he had gone to become the head of a small yeshivah. A year ago she had left for her husband's town, intent on creating a scandal. Now this nuisance had returned and was again tormenting the sick Rav, and when anyone tried to remove her, she started cursing in the presence of the Rav and Sarah-Rivkah, evil oaths that scared them to death. They begged her to have mercy and stop cursing, and did not let anyone so much as touch her.

Perele stood still for a long time, gaping at her husband in disbelief that anything like this could happen. She went to the bedroom and remained there a long time. When she emerged, she was all dressed up, wearing one of her long, flowing dresses, a half-length fur jacket with broad sleeves, and the hat with the three violets, and carried a light umbrella, even though outside there was not the slightest hint of rain. Her husband called after her; where was she going all dressed up like that, right before the holiday?

Perele looked into the mirror over the dresser and with her finger smoothed out her eyebrows and the wrinkles on her cheek. "I'm going to the Horadna Rav to put things in order. I see that the rebbetzin cannot be relied on."

Reb Uri-Zvi, utterly confused, stammered to his wife that it was unseemly for her to barge into the Horadna Rav's home. But Perele just glared at him with cold eyes that told Reb Uri-Zvi, first, that she wasn't asking his opinion and, second, that he ought to be ashamed for even thinking at a time like this of her having once been engaged to Reb Moshe-Mordecai. Reb Uri-Zvi understood his wife's look and drew back quickly like one who had burned his hand. He'd meant nothing by it, he mumbled. He was only worried that she might be detained there and not get back before sundown to light candles. And when he came back from the synagogue, he'd have no one to recite Kiddush for. And who would serve him dinner?

"I certainly hope to be back to light the candles. But if I am delayed there, you'll have to find your food yourself," replied the mistress of the house as she left, lifting her dress slightly as she stepped over the threshold, as if she were walking over a puddle of water.

In the front room of the Horadna Rav's home the kollel students were drinking tea. When Perele entered the house, the young men all looked at her, a bit astonished by her peculiar outfit. No one asked her whom she was looking for—it was as if this were the town inn. She went into the second room, the rabbinical courtroom, and came face to face with the astonished Horadna Rebbetzin. Sarah-Rivkah was sitting at the end of the long bench next to the table that took up most of the room, and was listening, with her hands lying helplessly on her lap, to a woman sitting opposite her.

Perele saw a woman in her fifties with a wrinkled face and bags under her eyes, yet with heavy rouge on her cheeks and deep red on her lips. She wore a wig—a wildly disheveled pile of hair—high-heeled black shoes and black stockings, a tight dress that accentuated her hips, and a knit jacket of brown wool. Perele guessed at once that this was the vicious agunah who cursed in the presence of the Rav and drove the whole household crazy. The gaudily painted agunah looked back at the tiny woman who had just entered, at her long dress and her flowered hat, and could barely keep from laughing. But at that very moment Perele's voice rang out loud and clear, like a command.

"Horadna Rebbetzin, I've come to visit the Rav and help you get ready for the holiday. Would you be good enough to go to your husband and tell him the Horadna Maggid's Rebbetzin is here to see him?"

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Sarah-Rivkah cast an even more forlorn look at Perele and then silently went into the sick man's room. The other woman started talking hastily to Perele. She was pleased to meet the Horadna Maggid's wife; she was just thinking of bringing her case to him. Her name was Mantcha Repnik —everyone in Horadna knew her. For years the Horadna Rav had promised to bring her husband back to her, but now it seemed he would not be able to help her. "He's got one foot in the grave," she said, winking with a vulgar laugh and motioning with her head toward the Rav's room. The woman continued to talk, one moment with a hoarse, throaty voice and a minute later with the shriek of a night bird. She told her story as if Perele were already familiar with half of it. In Glebokie she had discovered that her husband, after deserting her, had started a small yeshivah there. So she had gone there and found that cockroach surrounded by a gang of freeloaders, black cockroaches just like him, but much younger and even smaller. Her husband was a runt, no bigger than a fig. Only his beard was huge, and he had a cold, miserable face. But when he saw her, that ugly puss had become white as wax. They put better-looking people to rest in their graves. "That's where he belongs, and no Messiah will resurrect that scoundrel."

Sarah-Rivkah returned from the bedroom looking somewhat revived. "The place is really a mess, not at all ready for the holiday," she said apologetically. Perele made her way to the bedroom, and when she noticed Mantcha Repnik following her, she turned and said imperiously, "You can't come in, I have something to discuss with the Rav." Mantcha Repnik stood stunned. It had never happened before that she didn't get her way in the Horadna Rav's house.

THE Graipewo Rebbetzin entered the bedroom, her face stiffly calm but her lips quivering and her heart beating rapidly. The Rav was sitting up in bed, propped up by pillows, the blanket drawn up to his beard, which was yet whiter than when Perele had last seen him. His cheeks were puffy, his skin grayish, his nostrils very wide, but even the wrinkles on his face radiated kindliness.

"How is the Horadna Rav?" Perele barely managed to say as she hastily sat down on a chair, feeling her knees suddenly buckle under her.

The Rav said softly, "Thank God, I'm feeling a little better." He spoke unusually quickly, his eyes cast down, fixed on the blanket. He was, it seemed, just as uncomfortable meeting his former betrothed as she was meeting him.

"The burden of the town—the court and all the communal matters—falls now on your husband, the Town Maggid. I understand that he hasn't had the time to come here, this being the week before Shavuoth. He has to prepare his sermons, after all. But I hope he'll come to see me after the holiday. Please tell him I would really like to discuss important communal matters with him."

Perele did not take her eyes off him. She felt he was sincere in asking her husband to take over. His words and his appearance showed that he was ill, very ill, much more than he admitted to others. She appreciated Reb Moshe-Mordecai's genius and wisdom more than anyone, and she saw it even more now that he was stepping down. Before, she thought, he had given in just to avoid a fight, yet since he took sick, he had wanted with all his heart to elevate her husband. Though he looked very old and was deathly sick, Perele could not drive out of her mind the thought that she had not been worthy of being married to so great a man. She didn't want to remember that not so long ago she had argued with her husband for allowing their sons to attend Rabbi Eisenstadt's lectures. She hadn't wanted people to think the sons had nothing left to learn from their own father. Now she felt the exact opposite: her children were not close enough to Reb Moshe-Mordecai. Yet as she was about to speak, she checked herself and uttered something very different.

"I want to thank you for being so friendly to my Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah. Our sons attended the yeshivah for many years, but their business has forced them to neglect their Talmudic studies. But now that you've opened the kollel, they manage to get away for a few hours to study once more."

The Rav nodded his head with sad resignation as he wondered when he'd ever again be able to teach in the kollel. Perele turned to Sarah-Rivkah, who had been standing in a corner of the room with a sad smile, looking like a stranger in her own house.

"Horadna Rebbetzin, I've heard that your doctor is not one of the best in the city. We should ask a team of doctors to confer. Specialists will be better able to help the Rav to recover. I'll help you arrange it."

MANTCHA Repnik suddenly burst into the bedroom and placed herself in front of Perele. "I really thought you had private matters to discuss with the Rav. But I've listened at the door and I see you have come here just to babble, you dolled-up mannequin. If that's the case, I'm as much a princess as you are. I've been coming here before you ever dreamed of becoming a Horadna Rebbetzin." And to prove to Perele how much at home she was, Mantcha Repnik turned to the Rav and continued her story of how she'd gone to her husband's town and seized him by the ear. All Glebokie was beside itself: how could a teacher of Torah just leave his wife without giving her a divorce? Her husband, the dwarf with the long beard and stone face, claimed that he did want to give her a divorce. So she said that before she'd accept a divorce from him, God would put a pox on his skin, boils in his armpits, gout in his joints, a pain in his heart, and cramps in his bowels. She had tattled on him all over

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town for months until his name was as black as a burned pot. Finally, his yeshivah had tumbled like a house of cards. At first the Glebokie townspeople had sided with her, but then they'd begun to take his part. Of course, he had bought them all off. "Take the divorce," they'd told her, "the two of you are just not made for each other." "Take a divorce?" she answered them. "May the earth take them! They say that I and my husband are not a good match? But they and the angel of death are a perfect match!"

The Rav lay still, with his eyes closed, and occasionally sighing heavily. Sarah-Rivkah's face was getting paler and paler, and her hands shook. It was plain that they were both well acquainted with the foul language of this harridan, but each time curses poured out of her mouth, they both shuddered.

Perele rose and said loudly, "Close that worm-infested mouth of yours! Get out of here this minute!"

Mantcha Repnik laughed out loud and again stood facing Perele, her hands provocatively on her hips. "Before they throw me out of here, they'll have to carry somebody out in a wooden box!"

The Rav tossed himself about and pleaded, "No more cursing! Have mercy! Stop that cursing!"

Sarah-Rivkah wrung her hands and said to Perele, just short of sobbing, "Please, leave her alone. We're used to suffering this and we just keep quiet."

Perele, however, tapped her foot on the floor and screamed: "Shame on you, Horadna Rebbetzin! This tramp should have her eyes gouged out! You should have called the police to kick her out. And you're afraid of her curses? She's not a widow, she's no orphan, that God should listen to her. She's a charlatan, a rogue who plays crazy to intimidate you."

Sarah-Rivkah shrank away, terrified. Perele poked her umbrella at the woman, who retreated until they were both out the door and in the courtroom. In the doorway leading to the foyer stood the students, looking on dumbfounded. Perele then raised her umbrella higher as if to poke out Mantcha Repnik's eyes and yelled at the students: "Do you call yourselves men? Champions of Torah? A sly, brutish creature torments the Horadna Rav, and you permit this to happen!" The young men looked at one another, and one of them grumbled that the rebbetzin would not let anyone touch the woman. Mantcha Repnik suddenly called out tearfully, "Jewish children, have pity, I'm a forsaken agunah."

But Perele's voice rang out louder. "Throw her down the front stairs, I tell you. I'll answer to God and man for it! And if you won't do it, I promise you I'll split her skull right here with this umbrella!"

Mantcha Repnik ran out, a curse on her lips, and slammed the door so no one would follow her. One of the young men laughed. "The woman's a Cossack," and it wasn't altogether clear which of the two women he meant. The battle-fatigued Perele caught her breath and looked angrily at the students. She wondered if any of these so-called men had been among those rabble-rousers who hadn't let her husband speak in the Grand Synagogue. But there didn't seem to be any of the rowdy Horadna Agudahniks among them. No doubt these had come to study in Rabbi Eisenstadt's kollel because they seemed to be truly good for nothing, neither to hold a pulpit nor run a business. The young men were stunned by the harangue of this strangely dressed woman who acted as if she was Rabbi Eisenstadt's closest relative.

"Go home, all of you, and get ready for the holiday. Or go to the beth midrash and study. This isn't a tea room. The Horadna Rebbetzin and I will take care of the Rav."

She stood waiting until the group turned to leave. One of them wanted to go into the bedroom to say goodbye to the Rav. Perele said she'd give the Rav regards from all of his students. Then Perele returned to the bedroom, where she found a new scene. The Rav was consoling his wife, pleading with her to stop crying. But she just stood in a corner sobbing like a child, as if her tears were draining her years and making of her a little girl who was hurt at everyone being against her—her father, her mother, even her doll. Rage welled up within Perele and she bit her lip so as not to start screaming that the Horadna Rebbetzin belonged in a home for the retarded or the senile. She looked at the Rav, too, with anger. The great Gaon and Rav of Horadna trembled before the curses of a scoundrel as if she were a demon. But the grudge that the Staropol Rav's daughter, his first betrothed, bore against him had never, it seemed, crossed his mind.

"Horadna Rebbetzin, I've come to help you prepare for the holiday and I've got to get back to my house to light candles and hear my husband's Kiddush," Perele declared. Imperiously she ordered Sarah-Rivkah to follow her into the kitchen.

The Rav listened and looked in disbelief as his wife suddenly stopped crying and followed the Graipewo Rebbetzin out of the room with the docile obedience of a simple maid. Perele took off her fur jacket with the broad sleeves and led the way into the disorderly, dimly lit kitchen where the maid was busy washing the heaps of tea dishes that had been left in the front room.

19.

So completely did the Town Maggid's wife take charge of the Eisenstadt household that it was she who summoned a team of doctors to examine the patient. Before they entered the Rav's room, she admonished them that, whatever their finding, they should tell him he would recover. "Many of our people today," she declared

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in a sharp, shrill voice, "take after the Gentiles even in telling sick people the truth. But we believing Jews feel strongly that one must not rob the patient of his faith in the Almighty."

She and Sarah-Rivkah waited together outside the bedroom. When the doctors finally emerged, they were plainly reluctant to tell even the two women the whole truth; but their long faces showed clearly that they did not have much hope for the Rav. Sarah-Rivkah broke down in tears. Perele shushed her: "Stop crying, Horadna Rebbetzin. If your husband hears you, that alone could finish him, God forbid." The two of them walked into the bedroom and Sarah-Rivkah watched silently as Perele calmly and firmly spoke to Reb Moshe-Mordecai. "The Horadna Rav will yet, with God's help, deliver many more lectures to his students. For the time being, though, you must rest and talk very little. That's what the doctors ordered." The Rav listened with his head turned aside, as if he knew he was not being told the truth. Then he murmured that he had no desire to lie there like a prisoner, cut off from people. "If a scholar wants to see me," he commanded quietly, "let him in."

But ever since Perele had turned the kollel students out the day before Shavuoth, the young men had stayed away. When the townspeople learned of the doctors' findings, they all recited Psalms before an opened Ark after services, in hopes of a miracle.

Just at that time, a young man, a scholar, who knew nothing of all this, happened to be passing through Horadna, and decided to call on the Rav to engage him in Talmudic discussion. Perele met the young man in the foyer and asked him what his business was. The young man—still with a round, childlike face, curly blond sidelocks, and newly sprouted soft down on his fresh cheeks—replied that he had no special business, he just wanted to discuss Talmud with the Rav.

"The Rav is not well and must not do a lot of talking, so don't tire him out," Perele warned as she ushered him into the bedoom.

Sarah-Rivkah, standing beside her husband's bed, looked at the visitor with her great eyes as if the intended bridegroom of her departed daughter had just walked into the room. Seeing the Rav in bed seemed to disturb the young man somewhat. Reb Moshe-Mordecai asked him what his name was, where he was from, and what tractate he was studying. The young man talked about his studies and insights in a lilting voice, waving his arms and becoming more and more excited. The sick Rav listened with his eyes nearly shut, now and then raising one eyebrow, then the other, and over his yellowish face flashed a shiver like a ray of light across calm, dark waters.

Perele watched as the Rav called the young man closer to him and caressed his cheek with a trembling hand. He drew him still closer, as if the youth were a cherished child of his old age. "Those are good points you are making. But you're too daring," the Rav laughed. "Aren't you afraid to take issue with the old commentators?" He asked the young scholar why he no longer wanted to study at the yeshivah in Radun. The young man, his blond sidelocks dangling, answered that since the old Rosh Yeshivah had passed away, the lectures were being delivered by his sons-in-law, and that was not good enough for him. "I can analyze the Talmud better than they," the young scholar concluded with a cool shrug. In Mir, he declared, he'd be able to study with older students more at his level. "So Radun is not big enough for you?" the Rav said with a smile that ran through every wrinkle on his worn face while his eyes shone with pride. "And do you have enough to cover your traveling expenses? Perhaps you need some money for some clothes?" No, the scholar answered, he had enough money and a valise full of clothes.

"Then go in good health, and good luck in your studies. In the summertime you must go for a walk every evening. The men of our generation are weak, so we must take good care of our health. And don't wait too long to get married. Give the Rosh Yeshivah of Mir my regards." The Rav kissed the young man on each temple and fell back onto his pillow exhausted. "Ask the students in the yeshivah to pray for me, and you pray for me, too. Give me a blessing."

Tears ran from the Rav's eyes and fell into his tangled beard. The young scholar looked at the two women fearfully, struck all at once by a realization of how gravely ill the Rav in fact was. Sarah-Rivkah sat frozen, but Perele nodded and blinked at him, telling him to say his farewells and leave. "I will pray for you as I would for my own father," the young scholar stammered and softly walked out, pale and shaken.

In the room hovered a pathetic silence. The sick man lapsed into a light sleep, and Perele's eyes welled with tears as she watched him. She had never imagined that this Gaon, this cold intellect, could show such tender affection to another man's son. Only now did she understand why his followers and students were so devoted to him. As if he had heard these thoughts, the Rav suddenly awoke and groaned restlessly.

"What is to become of the kollel? The students have all left their secure homes to study here. Without leadership the whole thing will fall apart. Almighty God!" He sighed deeply as he once again drifted off into a faint sleep.

Perele quietly left the bedroom and Sarah-Rivkah followed, afraid to be left alone with her sick husband. "When are you coming back?" she asked anxiously. Perele answered dryly that she'd come when she had the time. Her own husband, after all, was also getting on in years and had to be watched, and with that she departed.

THE rebbetzin walked through the streets with a bitter smile on her face as she thought of the role she was now playing in Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt's life. She stopped to watch a young boy rolling a barrel hoop through

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the street and then caught herself wondering why that had arrested her attention. The trees were still radiating their bright green glow, but the branches were already bowed under their heavy leafy load. The setting sun in the west seemed in Perele's eyes like the last yellow flicker of a memorial candle. "The sun will soon have set," she thought, "and tomorrow it will rise anew, as always. But a man can never become young again and rise anew." Neither could she turn back the wheel of her fate. She must guard her husband's health and see to it that he attained in Horadna the greatness that had eluded him all those years in tiny Graipewo. She was also determined not to let her sons spend the rest of their lives as shoe salesmen. The son-in-law, she knew, was a hopeless case. Serel had chosen that boor just to spite her mother, and there was nothing she could do about it.

Since Perele had been going to attend the sick Rav, her actions had bewildered her husband even more than usual. On the one hand, she watched carefully to see that he ate well and got enough sleep, didn't overwork himself at the Rabbinical Court or make his sermons too long, and didn't drink anything cold when he was perspiring. She had also taken him to one of Rabbi Eisenstadt's heart doctors for a checkup, and when he came out of the examination room with the happy look of one who has just received a clean bill of health, thank God, Perele raised her eyes to the ceiling and also thanked heaven. But, on the other hand, she carped at him more than ever for not having finished his book. "Even Reb Moshe-Mordecai," she said, "sick as he is, the minute he feels a little better, he looks through his papers and talks about having another volume of his responsa published. But my husband, the Horadna Maggid, whenever anyone comes to confer on a public matter, he stammers and asks, 'And what do you say? What's your thinking on this?' Rabbi Eisenstadt never asked anyone's opinion. He issued his ruling and that was that."

"So what can I do? I'm not a Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. Does that mean you're sorry you married me?" His heavy hands quivered at his sides. And now his dear wife had come home with a new idea.

"Why don't you go to the kollel and conduct classes? Reb Moshe-Mordecai is concerned that the academy may fall apart."

"Are you out of your mind?" Reb Uri-Zvi looked at his wife, stunned and fearful of this new burden she was seeking to place on his shoulders. "The scholars wouldn't attend my lectures and the Rav would never allow it. You are not to breathe a word of this to anyone! People will say I'm looking to inherit Reb Moshe-Mordecai's position while he's still alive."

"Then go visit him yourself," Perele said, "and start talking about communal matters. You'll see, he'll ask you himself to do it. He'll ask you to look after the students in the kollel, and I'll be able to help you administer the kollel much better than Sarah-Rivkah helped her husband. And if you're the administrator, then sooner or later you'll be giving lectures. After all, why should your life's work lie buried in print?"

Reb Uri-Zvi never ceased to wonder at his wife's indefatigable plotting, the fresh schemes she was perpetually concocting. She also advised him that when the time came for him to deliver a lecture to the scholars of the kollel, he should ask his sons to help him. They must stand on either side of him and be ready to rebut the questions the students would throw at him to belittle his teachings and make small change of his discourse. He must insist that his sons devote themselves more to study, letting their wives and their salesmen worry about the business. In other rabbinical households, parents and children helped one another, but on her family, for some reason, all the curses of the Bible had been visited.

20.

RABBI Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt slowly flickered out like a dying flame, passing away on the eve of Tishah B'Av. Exhausted by hour after hour of reciting Psalms and by day after day of waiting for a miracle, the Rav's disciples and his closest friends spread the news: "It's all over," and fell into silence. That night, as they sat on the overturned benches and recited Lamentations, the gloomy darkness pressed their heads even lower. The shadows of the candles shone ghostlike as the town wept not only for the Exile and for the destruction of the Holy Temple, but also for the departed Rav.

The funeral was delayed until after Tishah B'Av to give rabbis from all over Lithuania enough time to get to Horadna, to pay their respects and to eulogize the Rav. As was the longtime custom in Horadna, on Tishah B'Av people went for walks in the tall grass of the cemetery, among the thorny bushes and the small trees laden with wild apples. This year they stood at the graves of their pious ancestors, contemplating the plot where the great Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Ha-Levi Eisenstadt would soon be interred, as if the crypt of an ancient sage already stood there. People talked about his unique scholarship and widsom, and of his reputation in the world of Talmudic learning, as if he had been dead for centuries and lived only as a memory and in his work. On their way home from the cemetery the people saw black-bordered notices, signed by the Horadna Rabbinical Court, with news of the great loss and announcing that only the Rav's disciples would be pallbearers. The grief of the town grew with each passing hour. After the long day of Tishah B'Av, people joylessly broke the fast and went to sleep with stones on their hearts.

On the morning of the funeral Horadna was filled with rabbis, scholars, and Rosh Yeshivahs in the company of their sons, sons-in-law, and students. The black umbrellas on which the old men

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leaned, the broad black rabbinic hats and coats, the long beards and curly sidelocks, and the dark velvet mist of sorrow in everyone's eyes—all this black vied with the blinding sun, the bright blue of the sky, and the green of the trees. Horadna had seldom seen so great an assemblage of rabbis and scholars in her streets. Their solemn forms and pious faces diffused an aura of godliness, an anxious hush, like the sorrow of the covered mirrors in a house of mourning.

In the office of the kehillah, however, a storm was brewing. The sons of every visiting Rav clamored for their fathers to be given the honor of eulogizing the deceased. The students of every Rosh Yeshivah stood up for their own mentors and the members of the Horadna kehillah argued that their Rav ought to be eulogized by the Jews of Horadna alone. Hearing this, the retinues of the visiting scholars and Rabbi Eisenstadt's disciples, members of the Agudah, gave vent to their sorrow and their rage:

"You dare to talk! All the years the giant of Torah of our generation was in Horadna, what did he get from the people in this city? You tormented him with your stupid, petty wrangling, your foolish arguments! You should be following his coffin barefoot at the end of the procession, begging his forgiveness, not pushing your way to the front!"

As soon as the news of Rabbi Eisenstadt's passing reached Perele she knew there would be disputes over who should deliver the eulogies—rabbis fight for the honor of delivering a eulogy at a famous rabbinical funeral no less than for the privilege of reciting the blessings at a great wedding. She lost no time in going to her sons and pressing them to insist that the honor of the first eulogy belonged to their father.

This time the sons sided with their mother. Both Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah went to take part in the arguments that were going on in the kehillah. The right of the first eulogy, they insisted, belongs to the Town Maggid and head of the Rabbinical Court. They were supported by the trustees of the Stone Synagogue and the kehillah members. At last, the spokesmen for the rabbis from other towns agreed that since it was only fitting that someone from Horadna deliver a eulogy, it might as well be the Town Maggid.

Rabbi Koenigsberg was the first to eulogize, though he cried more than spoke as he stood beside the coffin in the middle of the courtyard. "The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!" The entire town of mourners wept along with the rabbi. But among the departed Rav's disciples and the Agudahniks drifted an angry muttering: "The Graipewo Rav has indeed plenty to weep about. He drew his share of blood from our sainted Gaon, the greatest in our generation. No doubt he thinks that now his rebbetzin will place on his head Reb Moshe-Mordecai's crown of Torah and anoint him the rabbinical authority of Horadna. We'll see about that!"

After the Town Maggid's address the coffin was brought inside and placed on the large board of the bimah in the middle of the synagogue. Gray-haired rabbis and Rosh Yeshivahs, one after another, ascended to speak from before the Ark. Their hands and voices trembled, their backs were all bent, their eyes half blind, their foreheads creased, all aged lifelong toilers in the vineyards of Torah. They spoke with much wailing and weeping, yet also with anger and reproach. One rabbi bewailed the lack of respect accorded Torah in this day and age and bemoaned the starving scholars and the desolate houses of study. Another speaker lashed out against the parties and factions that had adopted their own dogmas, having forsaken Maimonides' Thirteen Principles; they had devised their own code of conduct, fashioned after the ways of the Gentiles, in place of the laws and traditions of their ancestors. A third lamented the fate of the Jews in the Diaspora. But each speaker began and ended with the great light of the Diaspora, the luminous Sage Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Ha-Levi Eisenstadt, the flame of whose life had been extinguished, plunging the world into darkness. "Torah, Torah what will become of you?" the old rabbis and Rosh Yeshivahs sobbed, and the people packed into the synagogue sobbed along with them. The reddish glow of the lamps blinded the tear-swollen eyes of the crowd. The gloomy faces and beards glittered like wet stones in a damp cave until the very walls broke into a steamy sweat and the light of the lamps was shrouded in a yellowish fog. When the eulogies had concluded, the Rav's disciples lifted the black-draped coffin onto their shoulders. Someone cried out with a voice that pierced the very ceiling: "And it came to pass, when the Ark moved forward, that Moses said, 'Rise up, O Lord. . . .'" The people broke down in tears again, in wailing that welled up to the high windows above the crowded women's balcony. Not until the mourners left the confines of the synagogue could they catch their breath or wipe their drenched faces and talk to each other.

"We've always known—we knew, and yet we didn't know—who our Rav was. The great rabbis and dignitaries from afar had to come today to tell it to us, now when it's too late. Never again will Horadna have a jewel like that!"

The streets around the synagogue swayed and strained from the onrushing flood of people. When the disciples at the head of the procession with the coffin on their shoulders came to a corner, the storekeepers on either side of the street hurriedly closed their businesses. It was a long way to the cemetery, and more rabbis intended to speak there, before and after the ritual purification of the body. Yet the throng grew with every street like the rush of waters through a broken dam. The venerable old rabbis marched slowly, surrounded by their disci-

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ples, students, and children. Behind them walked great waves of townspeople, followed by the empty hearse, a simple wagon pulled by two horses. Poor shopkeepers and humble laborers trudged alongside with a silent fear in their eyes, frightened to be left in this world without their Rav. Along the sidewalks stood young men in summer hats and young women in bright summer kerchiefs. Even the non-religious covered their heads as the funeral procession passed by.

The Horadna Rebbetzin, Sarah-Rivkah, walked directly behind the pallbearers, surrounded by the wives of the judges on the Rabbinical Court. Wrapped in a black shawl, with a deathly pallor on her face, she looked otherworldly. Throughout the eulogies, not so much as a sob was heard from her and not a sound came from her frozen lips. The women around her saw it as a bad sign: she would do her crying later, alone, and God only knew when she would stop. Sarah-Rivkah was indeed waiting for the torment of the funeral with the eulogies to be over, waiting to be left alone, all alone. Then she'd be able to sit in her home and cry, to come to the fresh grave of her husband and cry, to come to cry in the tall, wild grass on the grave of her little girl. She would then fall on the graves of her father and mother, on the graves of her ancestors. Half the cemetery was already hers, she thought. And when she ran out of tears, she'd be silent. When her husband was alive, he had belonged to the world, yet he had belonged to her, too; now he belonged only to the world. All the eulogies praised her Moshe-Mordecai's greatness and scholarship and lamented for a world orphaned by his death. But no one thought it worth mentioning, or even seemed to remember, that Moshe-Mordecai himself had stood like a little orphan at the funeral of his only child. If her husband had been a carpenter as her father had secretly dreamed of being, he would have belonged only to her and their child in life, and also in death.

The wife of the Town Maggid walked in the middle of the townswomen, all of whom praised her for easing the Horadna Rav's last weeks. But Perele spoke to no one. She felt sand on her lips, a dryness in her throat, and a pain in her chest. Strange thoughts flew through her mind like blackbirds pecking at her brain. As often as she had seen and heard of Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt's greatness through these many years, she had never seen it so clearly as now amid this great assembly of rabbis and this outpouring of grief by an entire city. Even her father, the sainted Staropol Rav, had never been accorded such reverence, neither during his lifetime nor after his death. And Reb Moshe-Mordecai's reputation would grow with each passing day, Perele thought, as the legends of his greatness spread and the genius of his works was appreciated by generations to come. But her husband—her dear husband, he should live and be well to a hundred and twenty—would never achieve a third, not a fifth, of this. In spite of herself, Perele thought also of Reb Moshe-Mordecai's feelings toward her. At first she had thought it was because of her that he had relented and accepted Reb Uri-Zvi as the Maggid of Horadna. But as a constant visitor these past few weeks, it had become clear to her that it was the Rebbetzin Sarah-Rivkah who prevailed on him to give in. And in those moments in which Reb Moshe-Mordecai felt a little better, he had looked at his wife with love and pity. He had thanked Perele very politely, yet with nothing like a warm look, as if he had completely forgotten that she had once been his betrothed.

Perele came home from the funeral with a throbbing headache, so she lay down on the sofa with a damp cloth on her forehead. Beads of sweat dangled on the stiff hairs of her upper lip; under her downcast eyelashes welled tears that stung like needles and refused to be shed. She searched her mind for someone to blame for her bitterness and at last decided that it was all the fault of her father, of blessed memory. As a child growing up in her father's house she had heard time and time again that the world was divided into two: scholars to one side, and everyone else to the other. And scholars were also of different kinds: the ordinary scholars, the gifted ones, and the great men of genius. Nothing about a person impressed her father more than when he could exclaim about him, "A Gaon! A genius!" Was it any wonder, then, that she had grown up with the conviction that her husband must be a great Talmudist? So even now that she was a grandmother and Reb Moshe-Mordecai was in the next world, she could not forget that he had been supposed to be her husband—and yet it was not to be.

21.

THE SUMMER days burned hot and suffocating. A damp heat lay on the walls and on people's faces. The skies were filled with gray clouds like billowing smoke, but it did not rain. Perele spent sleepless nights suffering from rheumatism in her knuckles and pains in her knees and back. Before dawn, she heard the feeble birds chirping hoarsely, begging for rain. During those few weeks in which Perele was visiting the ailing Reb Moshe-Mordecai, she had not attended to her own housework, and that was just not like her. She crawled out of bed and tried to do a little straightening up, but her head swam as if she had gotten up too soon after childbirth. Still she steeled herself and got dressed, only to lie down once again on the sofa. Her husband had to bring her a glass of tea. The women in town were saying that the Town Maggid's wife had so worn herself out in caring for the Rav that she became sick herself. A neighbor from the Stone Synagogue and Bashka, the wife of the Schloss Street Rabbi, came to visit. The two women sat beside the sofa as Bashka talked about her condolence call on the Rebbetzin

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Sarah-Rivkah. "She sits in mourning on a low stool, without a drop of blood in her face, and says peculiar things."

"I was planning to visit her today, but when I try to walk, the whole room spins before my eyes," Perele said, heaving a tired sigh. "What kind of peculiar things?"

"Well, everyone knows," Bashka related, "how Sarah-Rivkah always hated being called the Horadna Rebbetzin. But in the past she would dismiss it with a smile; now her whole body trembles and she cries out: 'Don't call me Horadna Rebbetzin. I have paid too much for that title!' All she wants to talk about is the many happy years she had with her husband and how he told her time and again, even as he lay sick, that he could never have hoped to find a better, more suitable wife. As she says this, a fresh streak of color crosses her cheeks, yet she sounds as if she were answering the charges of some accuser."

"Well, aren't matches made in Heaven?" Perele said. "So what's the use of talking?" She kept her eyes shut as she talked, as if afraid to see in Bashka's face that she knew more than she was saying. "I'll visit her as soon as I've gotten some of my strength back."

"I'm not sure she wants anyone to visit her," Perele's neighbor from the Stone Synagogue broke in with a worried look on her face. "When I visited the rebbetzin, she sat there cold and silent while that crazy woman, the agunah Mantcha Repnik, had the run of the house. In fact, Sarah-Rivkah was quite friendly and chummy with her."

Perele widened her eyes in astonishment and looked at the woman from the synagogue. "That foul-mouthed pest who tormented the sick Rav? The one I threw out of the house?"

The woman nodded. "Yes, that's the one. You've no idea how she was cursing. May all her curses fall into the sea."

"That agunah with the venomous mouth has certainly maligned me in that house," Perele thought. She said in utter surprise, "Sarah-Rivkah, tells how happy the Rav was with her. Then why does she think so little of herself as to befriend a vicious woman like that Mantcha Repnik? They say that Repnik, her husband, is a fine man, yet he had to run away from her."

Perele maintained her aloof calm until her two guests left. Then she loosened her taut nerves with a deep sigh and tapped on the windowsill next to the sofa as if playing her thoughts on the wood:

"Sarah-Rivkah must hate me, and she surely doesn't want to see me anymore, even though she could not have managed without me when her husband was ill. That must be why she clings to that crazy agunah I threw out—to make sure I don't come to visit. Even before her husband's death she looked at me with hatred when she saw how quiet and orderly I'd made her house while she didn't know how to tie a ribbon to a cat's tail. All that business about her husband having told her how happy their life had been together—she wanted it to get back to me. But she was lying . . . and then again, perhaps she was speaking the truth. Her husband might have told her this to allay any suspicions she might have had that he regretted not having married me, and now that I think about it, I never really saw any sign of regret that he had not married me. Well, then let the former Horadna Rebbetzin stay with that wretched hussy Mantcha Repnik. I'm not going to see her."

THE traffic of townspeople coming to the maggid's house with personal or communal problems increased. But Reb Uri-Zvi couldn't analyze a problem at a glance and proffer a quick, pithy bit of advice, as the late Rabbi Eisenstadt had done. On top of that, he trembled before his rebbetzin. Whenever he took upon himself the responsibility for a matter or decision, Perele nagged him for having once again made a fool of himself. It didn't take long for the townspeople to notice that the maggid never made a move without first consulting his wife—so they started going directly to her.

"What does the rebbetzin think?" asked the three trustees of the Stone Synagogue as they walked briskly into Perele's room, with the familiarity of close relatives—it was they, after all, who had made Rabbi Koenigsberg a preacher in their synagogue and put him on the Rabbinical Court of Horadna.

Meir-Michael Jaffe was the first to speak: Horadna indeed still mourned the loss of its Rav. But since this Saturday was the Sabbath of Consolation, the rabbi ought to speak in the synagogue first and foremost about the Land of Israel, as he had at this time last year. Moshe Moskowitz did not attempt to hide his resentment at Rabbi Koenigsberg's neglect of the Stone Synagogue since his becoming Town Maggid and head of the Rabbinical Court. Now he hoped the rabbi would return. David Ganz—chewing as he spoke, like an old man munching a hard crust of bread—complained that the Agudahniks had used the Horadna Rav's funeral and eulogies to strengthen their own position. Now the maggid must speak about the Return to Zion: let the town see that Mizrachi was, thank God, still alive and well.

"Of course I will, God willing, talk about the commandment of settling the Land of Israel. Why shouldn't I?" Rabbi Koenigsberg replied, looking uneasily at his wife, who had displeasure clearly inscribed on her creased forehead.

"The Rav will speak in the Grand Synagogue, where all the Jews of Horadna come—not in the Stone Synagogue, where only people from the neighborhood come. And he'll talk about all the precepts of the Torah, not only about settling in the Land of Israel. It's a shame the trustees want to rekindle the old arguments and pull the Rav into the battle between Agudah and Mizrachi." Perele declared this in a shrill voice which trailed off in a sigh. "But I'm only a tired old woman and I'm not very well now."

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The trustees understood that the rebbetzin was telling them to go. They silently looked at each other, seething with anger. Meir-Michael wanted to shout: "The rebbetzin is too quick to call her husband the Rav. He isn't the new Horadna Rav yet." Moshe Moskowitz wanted to say that it was the Stone Synagogue that had made the Graipewo Rav the Town Maggid, and the Stone Synagogue could just as easily make him the former Town Maggid, and also the former head of the Rabbinical Court! David Ganz bit his tongue to keep from saying that now he understood what was meant by the expression "a pig in a parlor." But the three trustees said nothing, they just stood there stunned and mute. They knew how to contend with a man, even the greatest Talmudist in the world like Rabbi Moshe-Mordecai Eisenstadt. But they hadn't counted on being outwitted and outmaneuvered by a woman who moaned and groaned day and night.

THAT evening Perele's two sons, her daughter, Serel, and her son-in-law came to see how she felt. They asked her whether they should call a doctor, but Perele dismissed the idea; she had already seen how little the doctors really knew when they attended Reb Moshe-Mordecai. So she simply sighed and asked her husband if he had prepared his lecture for the kollel. When the children were around, Reb Uri-Zvi felt braver, so he said that Perele shouldn't have spoken so harshly to the trustees that afternoon—they could give him a great deal of trouble. And he didn't even want to talk about conducting classes in the kollel. Rabbi Eisenstadt's disciples would never come to hear his lectures.

Serel gave her mother a quick, angry look, ready to take her father's side. Perele saw this immediately and decided to avoid fighting with her daughter. She spoke to her husband in a kindly tone: "But the Horadna Rav, may he stay away from the living, pleaded with you to look after his kollel."

"Reb Moshe-Mordecai, may he rest in peace, asked me to see to the kollel's material needs, but he never meant for me to deliver lectures," Reb Uri-Zvi said, and then he complained to his children that their mother was placing a burden on him that was too big for his shoulders. He could not be the Town Maggid and the head of the Rabbinical Court and still find time to prepare lectures for so advanced a group as the scholars of Reb Moshe-Mordecai's kollel. Besides, the young people would raise a storm against him. It had never occurred to them that he would dare to consider becoming their Rosh Yeshivah.

Serel opened her mouth to pounce on her mother, but her husband seized her elbow with his steel-like fingers and drew her back, out of the fray. Perele cast a wounded smile at her sons and said simply: "As your father wishes. If no one will conduct classes in the kollel, it will fall apart and the townspeople will say that the departed Rav left no worthy successor to fill his place. And this belief of your father's that the students would not accept him as their mentor—he's mistaken, you know. These scholars dread the prospect of seeing the kollel disbanded. Do you think they want to go back to their far-flung little towns to become burdens on the necks of their fathers-in-law? They'd be thrilled to accept the Horadna Maggid and head of the Horadna Rabbinical Court as their Rosh Yeshivah."

Perele then turned from her sons to her husband: "And why shouldn't your sons help you conduct the business of the Horadna rabbinate and the kollel? You're always telling me that Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah are as learned as any pulpit rabbi. So why should they sell shoes for the rest of their lives?"

Serel glanced at her brothers, and it seemed to her that since they had sat down next to their mother their short shopkeepers' whiskers had grown into the long, flowing beards worn by the rabbis of Horadna. Suddenly a thunderstorm flashed its lightning outside. Serel clapped her hands and called to her husband. "Ezra, come, let's go home! The children will be frightened by the storm. The girl who's looking after them isn't much more than a child herself and will be frightened, too."

Ezra immediately surmised that his wife wanted to leave because she couldn't stand her mother's talking. He also felt more than usually irritated with his mother-in-law. "If you're not afraid of getting wet, let's go," he answered. The father and her two brothers begged Serel to wait for the storm to pass, but she wouldn't hear of it. "My little chicks will be frightened. Father, give Ezra your umbrella." Perele stilled the protests of her husband and sons and said that Serel was right. She should be going home to the children. She wasn't made of sugar, she wouldn't melt in the rain.

"How could I be made of sugar when I'm your daughter? I have to thank God I'm not a hard, bitter radish like you!" Serel shouted into her mother's face and then she quickly left the house.

OUTSIDE, green bolts of lightning etched fiery trees in the sky, their roots in heaven and their branches whipping against the black earth. Clouds were split like blocks of ice, and the claps of thunder sounded like collapsing mountains. A howling wind ripped over the roofs, but it still hadn't started raining. Serel held her husband's arm, pulling him along and shouting at him over the wind, "The Horadna Rebbetzin sits in mourning over her husband, and my mother lies sick over not having been his wife."

Ezra stopped suddenly and looked at his wife as if he thought she might have lost her mind. As often as Serel had talked against her mother, she had never accused her of this.

Serel grabbed him and again pulled him along. "Let's go. The children are alone. You'll see—by the time she's through, Yankel-Dovid and Gedaliah will be judges on the Rabbinical Court. I could see it on their faces that they're taking a liking to the idea. My father needs this Horadna rabbinate like

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a hole in the head, but she wants to become the Horadna Rebbetzin! My father didn't marry well, it's as simple as that. My God, did he not marry well!"

Ezra laughed and answered that her mother might be able to have her way with her father, but she wouldn't find the city of Horadna so easy to manipulate. "Do you think the rabbis would allow Rabbi Uri-Zvi Koenigsberg to become the Rav and the Rosh Yeshivah—and let his two sons, two shopkeepers, sit on the Rabbinical Court? There would be such a battle, such a blazing fire, that a flood wouldn't put it out."

"Then you don't know my dear little mother. She'll win out over everyone—every one of them!" Serel shouted, as frenzied as the wind whirling around her.

A bolt split a stretch of cloud, a few cold, heavy drops fell, and then a thick torrent of rain poured down on them. In a moment they were both soaking wet. Ezra held his father-in-law's umbrella over Serel, but she stretched her head, her hair drenched and disheveled, out from under it and let the rain cool her feverish thoughts. She felt her heart leaping out of her body from the violence of her feelings. Angrily she shouted into the night, into the wind, into the torrent of rain: "My dear little mother will win out over everyone. Everyone!"

Glossary

Agudah (*Agudat Israel*): An organization, founded in 1912, of ultra-Orthodox Jews who opposed all reformist or modernizing tendencies including the Zionist movement

Agudahnik: Member of the *Agudah*

Agunah: A married woman, separated from her husband, who cannot remarry, either because he refuses to divorce her, or because it is uncertain whether he is still alive

Beth midrash: Study hall, usually attached to a synagogue

Bimah: Platform in a synagogue from which services are led

Brith: Literally, "covenant"; used to designate the rite of circumcision

Bund: Jewish Socialist party, founded in 1897, committed to secular nationalism, but sharply opposed to Zionism

Cholent: Traditional Sabbath-day dish, prepared on Friday and kept in a warming oven

Gaon: Preeminent scholar and sage

Halakhah: Jewish religious law as formulated in rabbinic sources

Hallah: Special loaf of bread prepared for the Sabbath

Halutz (pl: *Halutzim*): A Zionist pioneer in Palestine

Hanukkah: Festival commemorating the rededication of the Temple after a successful uprising against the Assyrian-Greek rulers of Palestine in 165 B.C.E.

Haphtorah: A reading from the Prophets which follows the reading from the Pentateuch on Sabbaths and holidays

Hasid (pl: *Hasidim*): Member of the mystical religious movement which emerged within Orthodox Judaism in the 18th century and which was organized around many different charismatic leaders known as *Rebbes* or *Tzaddikim*

Havdalah: The service concluding the Sabbath

Hofetz Hayyim: Literally, *Desirous of Life,* famous Talmudic work by Rabbi Israel Meir Ha-Kohen of Radun (1835-1933)

Hutzpah: Brazenness

Kaddish: The prayer for the dead

Karaite: Jewish sect which originated in the Middle Ages and which denied the authority of rabbinic tradition as against that of the Bible

Kashruth (adj: *kosher*): The system of dietary laws

Kehillah: The Jewish community council

Kiddush: Prayer recited over wine to consecrate the Sabbath and festivals

Kohen (pl: *kohanim*): A descendant of the priestly caste to whom certain special functions are assigned during religious services

Kollel: An academy of advanced Talmudic studies for married scholars, as opposed to a yeshivah, which is exclusively for unmarried men

Kreisi U'Fleisi: A Talmudic commentary by Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschütz (1690-1764); in accordance with rabbinic practice, the author is frequently designated by the title of his work

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Lag B'Omer: A semi-holiday falling between Passover and Shavuoth

Le-hayyim: To life! The standard Jewish toast

Maggid: A preacher, though not necessarily a rabbi

Maharam: Abbreviated name of Rabbi Meir ben Gedaliah of Lublin (1558-1616), one of the most authoritative commentators on the Talmud

Mahzor (pl: *mahzorim*): Festival prayer book

Malbim: The great Talmudic scholar, Rabbi Meir Leibush (1809-1879)

Matzoh: Unleavened bread eaten during Passover

Mazel Tov: Good luck

Megillah: Literally scroll, but usually referring to the Book of Esther, read in the synagogue on Purim

Menorah: Candelabrum

Midrash: Homiletic interpretations of Scripture

Mishnah: Legal codification of basic Jewish law, compiled by the 3rd century C.E. and forming part of the Talmud

Misnaged (pl: *misnagdim*): Literally "opponent," applied to an Orthodox Jew opposed to the Hasidic movement

Mizrachi: Organization, founded in 1902, of Orthodox Jews who supported Zionism

Passover (Heb: *Pesach*): Festival commemorating the deliverance of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt

Pnei Yehoshua: A Talmudic commentary

Purim: Holiday commemorating the rescue of Jews living under Persian rule in the 5th century B.C.E. from a plot to exterminate them

Rabiener: German for rabbi

Rav: A rabbi serving as the leader of a congregation or community

Reb: Honorific title of address for a man of learning

Rebbe: The hereditary leader of a Hasidic dynasty

Rebbetzin: The wife of a rabbi

Responsum (pl: *responsa*): Written replies by rabbinic authorities to questions concerning the correct interpretation of religious law

Rosh Hashanah: One of the High Holidays (the other being Yom Kippur) marking the start of the new year

Rosh Yeshivah: The head of a Talmudic academy

Sadducees: Jewish sect formed in the 3rd century B.C.E. which in opposition to the Pharisees rejected the authority of the Oral Law

Sandak: The man who holds the child during circumcision; considered a great honor

Shavuoth: The festival commemorating the giving of the Torah to the people of Israel

Shofar: Ram's horn, blown in the synagogue at certain points in the High Holiday services

Sholem Aleichem: Literally, Peace be unto you; used to say hello or goodbye

Siddur: Daily prayer book

Simchath Torah: The concluding day of the Sukkoth festival; during services Torah scrolls are carried in procession around the synagogue

Sukkoth: The feast of Tabernacles

Tallith: Prayer shawl

Tallith kattan: Ritual fringed garment worn all day by observant Jews, usually under a shirt

Talmud: The collection of Jewish law and tradition consisting of the Mishnah and its commentary, the Gemara

Talmud Torah: A Jewish elementary school

Tishah B'Av: Fast day commemorating the destruction of the Temple and other catastrophes of Jewish history

Torah: Narrowly, the Pentateuch or the Bible; more broadly, the entire body of Jewish law

Tzaddik: Righteous man (or, in the Hasidic movement, a charismatic leader)

Tzenah U'renah: Yiddish rendering of sacred texts used primarily by women as reading matter on the Sabbath

Yarmulke: A skull cap, worn by pious Jews when indoors

Yekke: Derogatory Yiddish term for German Jew

Yente: A gossipy woman

Yeshivah: Academy of Talmudic studies

Yizkor: Memorial prayer for the dead read in the synagogue on certain holidays

Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement; a fast day and the conclusion of the High Holidays

Yom Tov: Holiday or religious festival

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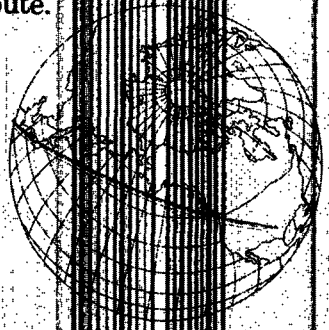

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